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THE

RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS

*(Which God hath spoken by the Mouth of all his Holy
Prophets since the World began)*

D E F E N D E D:

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER
THE REVEREND DAN TAYLOR'S
ASSERTIONS AND RE-ASSERTIONS
IN FAVOUR OF
ENDLESS MISERY,
IN FIVE LETTERS TO HIMSELF.

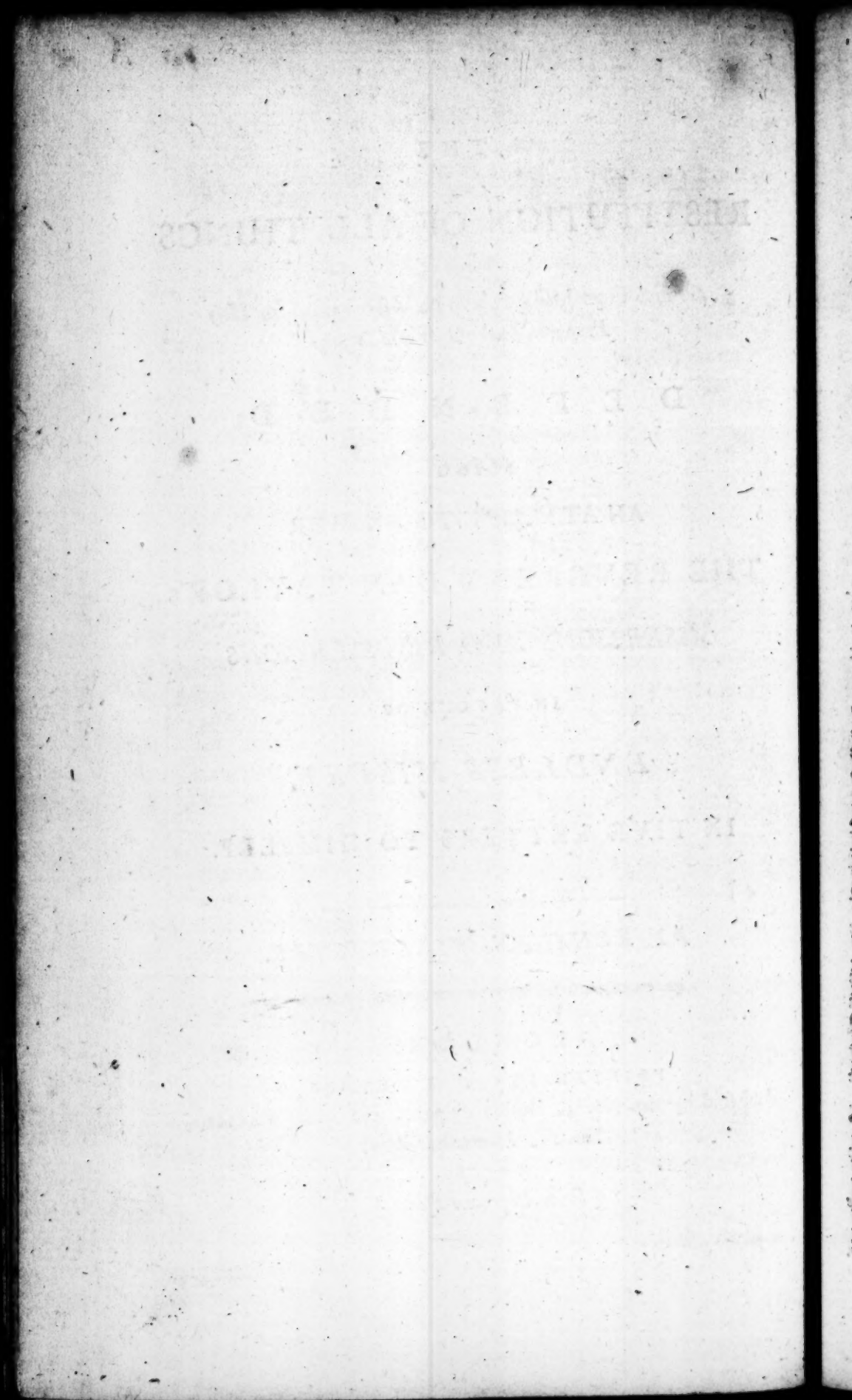
BY ELHANAN WINCHESTER. *

L O N D O N:

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LETTERS

TO THE

REV. DAN TAYLOR, &c.

LETTER I.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I Wish with much sincerity, that in the course of our debates upon this awful, interesting, and very important subject, we may attend only to the point in hand, and not lose time in personal reflections, nor witty animadversions upon each other, but directly aim seriously to investigate this point, whether the Scriptures of Truth do absolutely assure us that the torments of hell shall never have an end, while God exists; or whether there is any ground to hope, or reason to believe, that all mankind shall finally be brought to a state of subjection and willing obedience, and consequently be restored to a state of happiness.

It is my intention to treat you with the same personal respect throughout these Letters as I would in conversing with you face to face; and I am very apt to think, that if this rule was strictly observed by all combatants, there would not be so much cause of complaint as there now is, of asperity, and bitterness in controversial writings. Without any farther preamble, I shall come to the merits of the cause.

If the Greek word *aion*, and its derivatives *aionos*, *aioni*, *aionios*, *aionion*, &c. must necessarily always be understood in the New Testament to mean *endless*, *eternity*, or *always existing*, then I confess the ground is gone on which I stand, and I must be either a fool or a madman to attempt to vindicate my hypothesis. But I shall give you a few plain reasons, why I cannot believe that the word *aion* intends *eternity*.

B

First,

First, Because such a sense always affixed to the word, would in many instances be repugnant to other parts of Scripture. So 2 Cor. iv. 4. "In whom the God (*tou aionos toutou*) of this "aion, or age, has blinded the minds of them that believe "not," &c.

How strange this passage would read if we should translate it, *The God of this eternity, or this always existing!* Would it not approach towards blasphemy to call Satan *The God of Eternity?* Besides the absurdity of stiling him the God of *this eternity*; for *this eternity* necessarily implies some other eternity besides the present, and two eternities are an inconsistency in terms.

Again, Ephes. vi. 12. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood "—but against the rulers of the darkness (*tou aionos toutou*) "of this aion (or age.)" But translate the word *aionos* eternity, in this place, and then it must be read, *the darkness of this eternity, or, this always existing.*

1 Cor. i. 20. "Where is the wise, where is the scribe, "where is the disputer, (*tou aionos toutou?*)" But reason and common sense will inform us, that we must not render the word *aionos* eternity, but we may with great propriety render it *age*.

1 Tim. vi. 17. "Charge them that are rich, *en to nun aioni*, "in the now aion, or age," but not in *this eternity*. Tit. ii. 12. "That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live "soberly righteously and godly, (*en to nun aioni*) in the now "aion, or age," but not in the present eternity.

St. Matt. xiii. 22. "The seed among the thorns is he that "heareth the word, and the care (*tou aionos toutou*) of this "aion, or age, (not of *this eternity*) and the deceitfulness of "riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." For what common sense can endure that the word *aionos* in these places should be rendered by the word *eternity*?

The translators of the New Testament, sensible of this absurdity, have rendered the word *aionos*, as though it was synonymous with *kosmos*, *world*. But let us make a fair trial with the word *world*, and its relatives, and see how absurdly the following passages would read if we were always to translate the word *aion* *world*, St. Matt. vi. 13: "Thine is the kingdom, "and the power and the glory (*eis tous aionas*) to the worlds."

St. John, vi. 51. "He that eateth of this bread shall live "(*eis ton aiona*) to the world."

Chap. xi. 26. "He shall not die (*eis ton aiona*) to the "world."

Heb.

Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day,
" (*kai eis tous aionas*) *and to the worlds.*"

Rev. xiv. 11. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up
(*eis aionas aionon*) *to a world of worlds.*"

Heb. xiii. 20. The God of peace, who through the blood
" (*diatbekes aioniou*) *of the worldly covenant.*"

St. Matt. xix. 16. The rich man says to our Lord, "What
" shall I do to have (*zoen aionion*) *worldly life?*"

1 Tim. vi. 12. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on
" (*aioniou zoes*) *worldly life.*"

Ver. 19. "That they may lay hold on (*aioniou zoes*) *worldly*
" *life.*"

St. John, xii. 25. "He that hateth his life (*en to kosmo*
" *toutou*) in this world, shall keep it (*eis zoen aionion*) *to worldly*
" *life.*"

Rom. xvi. 26. "According to the commandment (*tou*
" *aioniou Theou*) *of the worldly God.*"

Heb. ix. 14. "Christ who (*dia pneumatos aioniou*) *through*
" *the worldly spirit* offered himself to God."

These, and a great number of similar passages, would be the
grossest absurdities by only rendering *aionos* *world*. It therefore
follows that *world* cannot be the true reading of the word
aion and its derivatives. And I shall go on to prove still farther
that the word *aion* cannot, even in the New Testament, signify
eternity, or *always existing*.

Secondly, Because there was a time before the *aion* was, yea,
before the *aions* plural, had a beginning. Acts xv. 18. "Known
" unto God are all his works (*ap' aionos*) *since the aion began.*"

Acts iii. 21. "Spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets
(*ap' aionos*) *since the aion began.*"

St. John ix. 32. " (*Ek tou aionos*) *since the aion began*, was it
not heard, &c." And the plural *aions*, or ages, are used in
the same manner.

1 Cor. ii. 7. "The hidden mystery of God, pre-ordained
" unto his glory (*pro ton aionon*) *before the aions began*; ver. 8.
" which none of the Princes (*ton aionos toutou*) *of this aion*
" *knew.*"

Ephes. iii. 9. "The mystery which has been hid in God
" (*apo ton aionon*) *from the beginning of the aions, or ages.*"

Col. i. 26. "The mystery that has been hid (*apo ton aionon*
" *kai apo ton geneon*) *from the aions, ages, and the generations,*
" but now is made manifest unto his saints."

Thirdly, I cannot conceive that the word *aion* must intend
eternity, because there are more *aions* than one; whereas

eternity, everlastingness, and forever, must be one individual, as implying an unity of consistence, and simple continuance: St. Luke xx. 34, 35. "And Jesus said unto them, The children "*(tou aionos toutou)* of this *aion* marry, and are given in marriage, but they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain "*(tou aionos ekeinou)* that other *aion*, and the resurrection from "the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage, &c."

Here we find *this* and *that*, and consequently two *aions*, a distinction observable in many parts of Scripture: So 1 Cor. ii. 6. "Yet not the wisdom (*tou aionos toutou*) of this *aion*, or age, "which cometh to nought."

Rom. xii. 2. "Be not conformed (*to aioni, touto*) to this "*aion*." And in the same distinguishing sense, we find mentioned frequently the *cares*, the *wisdom*, the *men*, the *things*, the *children* (*tou aionos toutou*) of this *aion*; all which imply that there must be some other *aion* beside the present, and consequently more *aions* than one.

Fourthly, That the word *aion* cannot mean *eternity*, is evident yet farther, because there are not only more *aions* than one, but these *aions* succeed one another as the links of a chain, the one beginning where the other ends. For example, St. Matt. xii. 32. "But whosoever speaketh against the Holy "Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither (*en touto to "*aioni*) in this *aion*, or age, (*oute en to mellonti*) nor in that to come."*

Ephes. i. 21. "And set him at his own right hand in the "heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and "might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not "only (*en to aioni touto*) in this *aion*, but also in that which is "to come."

Gal. i. 4. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might "seize us (*ek tou enestotos aionos ponerou*) out of this present "wicked *aion*, or age."

Ephes. ii. 7. "That (*en to aiosi tois eperchomenois*) in the "aions, or ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches "of his grace."

2 Tim. iv. 10. Demas is said to have forsaken Paul because of his love (*ton nun aiona*) to the present *aion*. Whereas Christians are described, Heb. vi. 4, 5, such as have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power, or virtue (*te mellontos aionos*) of the *aion* to come.

The present *aion*, therefore, as it began, so will it also end; and in its end be succeeded by another *aion* most essentially different from the past.

Fifthly, From hence also it appears again, that the word *aion* cannot mean *eternity*, because it must end, and be no more; of which we have further assurance, St. Matt. xxviii. 20. "And lo I am with you (*pasas tas emeras*) *all the days*; even to "the end (*tou aionos*) of the *aion*."

Chap. xiii. 39. "The harvest is the end, (*tou aionos*) of the "aion." Ver. 40. "So shall it be in the end (*tou aionos toutou*) "of this *aion*." Ver. 49. "So shall it be at the end (*tou aionos*) of the *aion*, or age."

Chap. xxiv. 3. "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and "of the end (*tou aionos*) of the *aion*, or age."

Sixthly, And not only *aion* singly and indefinitely, but (*ai aiones*) the *aions* plural, shall also have an end. Heb. ix. 26.

"But now once about (or towards) the conclusion (or closing "up together) of the *aions* (*epi sunteleia ton aionon*) he appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

1 Cor. x. 11. "And they were written for our admonition "upon whom the ends (*ton aionon*) of the *aions*, or ages, are "come."

These, dear Sir, are some reasons why I cannot believe that the word *aion*, in any of its forms, must be necessarily understood to mean *eternity*, or never ending duration: Whether they will satisfy you or not, I find freedom to shew why I dissent from you, and I trust it is for the sake of truth, and not merely to differ from my Christian friends who think otherwise.

I have thought of a method (in which I desire your assistance) which would have a natural tendency to discover the truth; and that is to translate all the passages in the New Testament where the word *aion* in any of its forms is used, by some one English word, keeping the rule in sight, that what *must* be the meaning in some places, and what *may* be the meaning in all, is the true sense.

As it is clearly seen above that the word *aion* cannot be always rendered by the word *forever*, nor the word *world* without the greatest absurdity, it is evident that we must find some other word that will answer the purpose, or despair for ever of being able to render it properly. And I do not know of any word in our language that bids so fair as the word *age* to render the word *aion* by. But it would exceed the bounds of a letter to translate all the passages in the New Testament wherein it is found; but in all those cited above it is better rendered by the word *age* than by

any other word whatever. And since *age* must be the meaning in some places, and may be in all without absurdity, I am therefore of opinion it will generally serve as a translation of the word *aion*, better than any other word in our language.

You may perhaps say that *age*, *ages*, *age of ages*, and *ages of ages*, are as improper to apply to God as *eternity* is to the devil. But although the words *age*, *ages*, &c. as applied to God's duration and kingdom, do not come up to the idea of his eternity, yet there is nothing inconsistent and absurd therein; for his being called *The God of the Ages*, or the *aionion God*, no more implies that he shall ever cease to be, than his being called *The Creator of the Ends of the Earth*, carries an idea that he did not create all things in the universe; or his being stiled *The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, forbids us to call him our God, and the God of the spirits of all flesh.

God is the *aionion God*, the God of all the ages, as much as he is the God of *Jacob*; yet neither is *aionion* properly *without end*, any more than *Jacob* is *all mankind*; and yet his being called the *aionion God*, no more destroys the attribute of his eternity, than his being stiled the *God of Jacob* limits his Providence and Grace to one man or family. The eternity of God is a known attribute in him, which no words can change, but it by no means follows that words of a limited nature being applied to him or his ways, are by such application changed for ever after, and must always be supposed to intend *endless*, let them be applied to what they will, because they have sometimes been applied to him that can have no end. Do you not know that the very same Hebrew word that is rendered *eternity* in *Isai. lvii. 15.* (the only time that word is found in the text of our English Bible) is used by *Jonah* for the time of his continuance in the belly of the fish? *Jonah ii. 6.* Words do not change their natural meaning because they are sometimes applied to subjects far more sublime and lofty in themselves than the words would naturally imply them to be. As the word *aionion* rendered *everlasting*, is sometimes confessedly applied to things of a finite duration, therefore the punishment of the wicked cannot by any means be certainly proved to be endless, merely because *aionion* is applied thereto; but there must be some other evidence to support so strange an hypothesis.

The *aions* in Scripture, appear to be like circles one in another, some of a smaller and others of a larger circumference, yet all deserve the name of *aionas*, or *ages*; even as the smallest circles deserve the name of circles as well as the largest. Minutes appear to be compleat portions of time, but many of them
are

are included within that larger portion of time which we call an hour: Hours compose days, which are larger revolutions of time; seven days make a week. Months are made up of weeks, and years of months. Seven years under the former dispensation brought about a period called the year of release, or the great week of years; and seven of those periods were included in that grand revolution, which brought about the Jubilee. This was the comprehensive age or period, which as the greater circle included all the lesser. Thus the Hebrews obtained the idea of their *gnad* and their *gnolam*, and from a source of the same nature the Greeks derived their *aion* and *aionas*. And thus these words are applied to many different subjects in the New Testament, and joined with periods of a longer or shorter date, but are all included within the great comprehensive period of our Saviour's mediatorial kingdom; which is indeed a period comprehending ages of ages; but as itself shall come to an end, so consequently all the periods included therein shall expire, as certainly as the end of any year implies an end of all the minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months which compose the same. Here is the ground on which I stand, and as I trust I am able to defend this by the authority of the sacred volume, I need not seek for any other. The kingdom of Christ shall be an universal kingdom; he is *God over all, blessed for ever*, all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. All things are put under him, (God the father, who did put all things under him, alone excepted) and all things shall be subdued unto him. His kingdom is an *aionion* kingdom, a dominion of ages, yea, of ages of ages. All rewards and punishments shall be distributed under his administration, and shall be begun, continued, and, as I believe, concluded while his kingdom lasts. And his kingdom shall last to the ages of ages, for thus declares the Apostle to the Hebrews, in that glorious address of the Father to the Son, "But unto the Son he saith (*O' Thronos sou O' Theos, eis ton aiona tou aionos*) *Thy throne, O God, is to the age of ages.*" Heb. i. 8.

Yet this kingdom and dispensation shall as certainly end, as ever any period came to a conclusion since time began. For the same inspired Apostle that informs us that the throne of the Son of God shall endure to that comprehensive period above mentioned, elsewhere informs us how long the Son of God must reign, viz. "Until all enemies are put under his feet." But not as Mediator to all eternity. For he assures us that "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all

“ rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till
 “ he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy
 “ that shall be destroyed is Death.” (Or, Death the last
 enemy shall be destroyed.) “ For he hath put all things under
 “ his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him,
 “ it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under
 “ him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then
 “ shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all
 “ things under him, that God may be all in all.” 1 Cor. xv.
 24.—28.

This passage puts the matter out of all doubt, and shews clearly that the (*aionai tou aionos*) *age of ages*, mentioned in Heb. i. 8. shall certainly end, and consequently all the ages and periods included therein. This being a case full in point, it answers fairly your challenge to produce a single passage where the words above quoted are ever applied to any subject, but what is absolutely of endless duration. The continuance of the throne and the kingdom of the Son is one of the longest periods of which Divine Revelation informs us, and yet we are expressly assured that an end shall come to that, and that another and higher dispensation shall then take place, concerning which we have only this short hint, that GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL, enough for us to know at present; this God hath revealed, but all beyond is hidden.

The sacred Scriptures are chiefly designed to inform us of what shall take place from the Creation of the World to the end of the kingdom of the Son of God, with whom we have to do, who is our Judge and our Lord. From his hand we must receive our rewards or punishments: and it is he who shall subdue and restore all things; and then shall he resign the kingdom to the Father: then shall the Fountain of Love be all in all. And as the Scripture speaketh but little of what took place before the ages began, or before the earth was created, so as little is said of what shall be after the end of all the ages, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father: only we are assured that God who is love, shall be all in all, which shall be a dispensation far superior to any that ever yet hath taken place, or that shall take place until then.

Thus I think the whole dispute might be terminated, if the *aionion* kingdom of the Son of God shall end, then shall all those lesser periods come to a conclusion which are included therein. If that state of universal dominion which our Lord shall enjoy as a reward for his labours and sufferings, shall end, and that glorious kingdom be delivered up to the Father, that God may

may be all in all, then certainly all those *aionion* rewards which Christ shall give to his saints and faithful ones in his kingdom, shall also end, and another and higher dispensation take place, in which the honour of Christ, and the happiness of the righteous shall be increased. For when the Son, who undertook the great work of bringing back all fallen creatures to God, shall have compleated the purpose of the Father, and in consequence shall resign the kingdom of universal nature and creature restored; his honour shall be raised to the highest pitch, as Joseph's was when he delivered up the land of Egypt again to Pharoah. O what what glory, honour, and dignity shall our dear Jesus receive, when he shall have subdued all things to himself! when he shall have destroyed Sin, Death, and the works of the Devil: Then shall the whole creation be filled with God, he whose name is Love shall be all in all, misery, of consequence shall no longer exist, but happiness can never cease.

Therefore as even the life *aionion* which our Saviour promises in the *aion* or *age* to come, belongs only to that age which is put in subjection to the Son, and which shall certainly come to an end, as we are assured by St. Paul; it is plain that *aionion* even when applied to the rewards of the next age, cannot be construed to mean *without end*, since *the end cometh*. And certainly if rewards are limited, there can be no shadow of a doubt but punishments are so too. Yet Christ shall never cease to be, but I believe that he, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, shall ever reign one God, world without end: and in this view of the matter, *of his kingdom there shall be no end*. And as for the happiness of the righteous, there never can be the least danger of its cessation, while God shall be all in all. Here is a sure and never-failing ground, and nothing more need be added to make it secure.

I have gone through the passages pointed out by you in the Greek New Testament, where the word *aionios* is used, and I thank you for the pains you have taken herein. The word is twice used in St. Matt. xxv. 46. as well as in Tit. i. 2. which makes seventy-one times in all in the New Testament, and instead of St. John v. 29. it is in the 39th verse of that chapter; otherwise your list is very correct. Five times the word certainly stands connected with future misery, St. Matt. xviii. 8. xxv. 41. 46. St. Mark iii. 29. 2 Thess. i. 9. All which I have noticed in my dialogues, and quoted the passages at large, and I trust considered them with all the candour that I was able. I think seriously from a review of all the passages in the
New

New Testament that *aionion* never in itself intends absolutely *never-ending*, in the strict sense of the word; for even that life with which it frequently stands connected in the New Testament belongs to that age to come, which shall be succeeded by another and more glorious dispensation, as I have already noticed; and as for the word being applied to God, there can be no impropriety in it, though it reaches not in itself to his boundless eternity. As you rightly derive *aionios* from *aion*, and as I have already mentioned that *aion* and its derivatives frequently, in the New Testament, are applied to the present age of the world, and therefore certainly cannot intend *always existing*, or *eternity*; consequently so weighty a point as *endless misery* should not be determined upon the meaning of any word that is ever applied to subjects of a limited duration.

But let us farther examine some of the passages in the New Testament where *aionion* is used, and see if it is not evidently used for limited duration. Let us take, for example, the last passage you have quoted, and which is the last in the New Testament where the word is used, and see what we can make of it if we render the word *aionion never-ending*.

Rev. xiv. 6. "And I saw another angel flying through the midst of Heaven, having (*euangelion aionion*) the *endless Gospel* to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people."

If the dispensation of the Gospel is *endless*, then it must continue to be preached to all eternity, even when faith and hope shall be no more. The next question is, To whom shall it be preached? Surely not to the happy, for they have no need of it; the Gospel has been always hitherto preached to fallen creatures, and if it is to be an *endless Gospel*, it must be preached to the damned to all eternity; but then there would remain this difficulty, viz. For what purpose it should be preached to them? If they can never be reclaimed, the Gospel is useless to them, and need not be preached at all; and if they are reclaimable, it may happen that they may all at last be reclaimed, and so the Gospel may be needed no more. So at any rate absurdities will follow, if we translate the word *aionion*, *endless*, in this place; and in this case the earth must always continue, for this *aionion* Gospel is to be preached to them that dwell thereon.

But I have no doubt you believe, as well as I, that the preaching of the Gospel will have an end, and I imagine that you think it will be over much sooner than I do, so that doubtless you will acknowledge that *aionion* cannot mean absolutely

lutely *endless* in this place; yet you did not mention this passage among the few where there appeared a slight ground of hesitation, though it certainly deserved some notice. You appear determined not to give up any passage in the New Testament where the word *aionion* is mentioned, but insist upon it, that it *may*, and even *must*, in all places intend *never-ending*. Where a servant returned to his master, he must be received to all eternity, rather than in one instance a favourite opinion of the meaning of a word should be given up. But in this case, though you have the authority of great and good men on your side, you will find it difficult to persuade common readers that St. Paul had any such thing as a *vast eternity* in view, when he wrote that word, any more than Moses had when God commanded that the servant who chose to continue with his master, and had his ear publicly pierced through in token of the same, should serve him *for ever*; which all explain, *during his natural life, or until the year of Jubilee*. And when even the most illiterate are fairly told, that just the same word *aionion* is used by St. Paul in Philem. v. 15. as is found in St. Matt. xviii. 8. xxv. 41, 46. 2 Thess. i. 9. and with no material difference in St. Mark, iii. 29. the only places where the word is found connected with future misery in the New Testament, they will perhaps generally be of opinion, that however true endless damnation may be, it cannot be certainly proved from its being five times called *aionion* in the New Testament, since the word is several times connected in the same Divine volume with things and times that must certainly end.

The passage in Jude v. 7. where Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them are said to be "set forth for an example "suffering the vengeance of *aionion* fire;" you think may be understood to mean *endless*, though the burning of those cities cannot be so understood, strictly, because the fire has ceased long since; but as you believe that their damnation in the fire of hell is *endless*, therefore the word *aionion* must intend *always existing*, even there, where at first sight you acknowledge there appears some slight ground of hesitation. But, my dear Sir, I must confess, that as I think it impossible for the Apostle Jude to contradict the Prophet Ezekiel, I cannot believe that he intended *endless* by *aionion*, in whatever possible manner it can be applied. For nothing can be more evident than that the actual burning of the cities of the plain has not even continued until now; water has long since taken place of the fire; and as for judging that *aionion* must intend *endless*, because the damnation of those inhabitants that were destroyed by fire and
brimstone

brimstone shall be *endless*, I think it is begging the question which should be proved; for I really should be led to conclude from the promises of God to bring again the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and to cause them to return to their former estate, and to give them to Jerusalem for daughters, in the bond of the New and Everlasting Covenant, that no such thing as their *endless* suffering in hell fire can be intended by St. Jude. And therefore *aionion*, so far from intending *endless* in this passage, is there an evident instance of the word being applied to subjects of a limited duration. For if the Prophet's words respecting the return of the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and their being brought back to their former estate, and given to Jerusalem for daughters in the New Covenant, do not intend the actual release and deliverance of those miserable captives of Sin, Death, and the Devil, who were destroyed by fire and brimstone from Heaven, it is in vain for me to think of discovering what their meaning can be. And I sincerely desire you, if you are able, to give a fair, consistent, and rational account of those Divine predictions. They must mean something, and whatever they intend must be accomplished.

If you are able to remove this difficulty, I shall be glad to see it done, and this must be removed to my satisfaction before I can acknowledge that the word *aionion* in the epistle of St. Jude intends *never-ending*. And the meaning of the word in this place is doubly important, for if it is only applied to the burning of the cities, then it is confessedly connected even in the New Testament, with something that ceased long ago, and therefore it cannot certainly prove *endless misery*: But if the word is applied to their punishment in the fire of hell, and yet their captivity is to be returned, &c. then not only is it proved that the word is used for a duration that shall have an end, and thereby the evidence of endless damnation will be considerably weakened, but the doctrine itself will be in a great measure totally overthrown. For if the inhabitants of Sodom and the rest of the cities of the plain that were wholly destroyed from off the earth, for their great sins and abominations, shall be at last restored, there is every reason to conclude the same of the rest of the human race.

The phrase *eis tous aionos ton aionon*, you assert, always in the New Testament intends *proper eternity*, or *everlasting duration*, which, according to your list, is used twenty times in that Sacred Book. I have carefully gone over all the passages, Gal. v.
5. should

5. should be Gal. i. 5. otherwise the passages are correctly quoted.

If you are right in asserting that this phrase always, in every place, denotes *everlasting duration*, or *proper eternity*, in the New Testament, then I am gone again; even though I have proved that *aionion* cannot intend *endless*; for I acknowledge (though some deny) that this singular phrase stands connected with the misery of the wicked, once at least in that book which I trust we both reverence and believe, Rev. xiv. 11. only there the phrase is without the articles; but I shall take no advantage of that circumstance, as you have taken none of Heb. i. 8. being only in the singular, you have testified that the phrase in that place intends the same as in any other passage, as it must, if it denotes a proper eternity in every place. But as I have proved that the expression there refers to the kingdom of the Son, which shall only continue until all are subdued, and then the end cometh, when he shall have delivered it up to the Father, &c. I might rest the cause there till a proper answer should be given. But I need not rest it on that passage alone, for Rev. xi. 15. is of the same kind, "And the seventh Angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he (that is Christ) shall reign *eis tous aionas ton aionon*," which I would render *to the ages of ages*; and this appears to me the true, proper, and native meaning of the phrase.

Christ must reign over the kingdoms of *this world*; for that very purpose they are given to him, and shall become his; and this is according to a great number of express prophecies: But unless you can prove that the kingdoms of this world must absolutely exist to all eternity, you will find it extremely difficult to maintain that the phrase intends proper eternity. For in that case the world, and the works that are therein, must never be burnt up, nor the several kingdoms thereof be annihilated. But as the throne, kingdom, and reign of Christ shall certainly end, or be delivered up to the Father, as I have observed before, it is evident that this phrase in this place cannot possibly intend *endless duration*.

This is sufficient for my purpose; but perhaps if we investigate the matter farther, we shall find that this singular phrase in this place *may intend* only the term of a thousand years; for the time of our Saviour's reign on earth, before the second resurrection, is five times expressly limited to a thousand years in Rev. xx. and I think none can suppose that the kingdoms of this

this world will remain after the conflagration. Here is therefore at any rate another instance of this phrase being used for a period or periods that shall have an end. For the reign of Christ over the kingdoms of this world must have an end.

In Rev. xxii. 5. the last place where this phrase is used in the New Testament, it is said of the servants of God, "And they shall reign *eis tous aionas ton aionon*;" or, *to the ages of ages*. But if Christ, the great King, shall finally deliver up his kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all, it is contrary to reason to suppose that the servants of God shall continue to reign, when their Lord shall reign no longer. His reign is limited to that period when all enemies shall be put under his feet, and by parity of reasoning their reign cannot be unlimited and without end.

The passage in Rev. xix. 3. which you have brought as one of the places where this phrase is joined with the future misery of mankind, will admit of some dispute. "And her smoke *rose up eis tous aionas ton aionon*;" or *to the ages of the ages*. To me and many others this appears to relate to the destruction of the city Rome, which was described in the two foregoing chapters. It is evident that the city standing upon seven hills, that in St. John's time reigned over the kings of the earth, and which has been drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, can be no other but the city of Rome, and this is confessed by the Roman Catholics themselves. This city is as certainly threatened with total destruction as ancient Babylon was, and the concluding scene is, that she shall be utterly burnt with fire: see chap. xvii. 16. xviii. 8. By this she shall be so totally destroyed, as to be rendered entirely uninhabitable for ever. Whether or not a volcano shall burst out of the earth where that city now stands, or not, time must discover. This burning and total destruction must take place long before the general conflagration, or else it need not be noted in so particular a manner, neither would the kings of the earth lament the fate of one city, if the whole globe was at the same time in flames. It is likely therefore that this destruction shall take place at or before the beginning of the Millennium. But let it begin when it will, the smoke of this particular city cannot continue longer than the general conflagration, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the world and the works therein shall be burnt up. Yet we, according to the promise of God, look for the earth to be renewed after the conflagration, and to become the habitation of righteousness; and then the smoke of even the burning world will no longer rise up, and certainly

certainly not the smoke of burning Rome. So I think, without hesitation, we may venture to say, that the phrase as used in this place must certainly intend limited periods. Now what *must be the meaning in some places, and what may be the meaning in all, is the true sense of the words.* I have shewn that the phrase *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, must certainly intend ages and limited periods in some cases, and it may, without the least absurdity, be so understood in all. For it is worth while for the Scriptures to assure us that God shall have praise and glory through all generations, as in Ephes. iii. 21. "Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, *eis pasas tas geneas tou aionos ton aionon. Amen.*" Which I should render, *Through all generations, to the ages of ages. So be it.* And is not this worthy of the Holy Spirit to declare? It is certainly good news for us to hear that our God, who hath been the same through all ages past, shall continue the same through all ages to come, and that he shall have glory, honour, and praise through them all. Our being informed in Scripture that God hath existed in all ages hitherto, doth not prevent our firmly believing that he existed from all eternity, although the expressions used may not in themselves naturally comprehend that idea; so when we are told by the same authority that he liveth, or shall live to the ages of ages, it in no wise hinders us from believing the absolute eternity of his existence.

When David says, "They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations;" and that there shall be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth," and that "his name shall be continued as long as the sun." Psal. lxxii. 5, 7, 17. We are not certainly obliged to believe the absolute eternity of the sun, moon, and the generations of men; merely because the name and fear of our Lord are compared to these things: Neither have we any reason to think that the name and fear of God shall ever cease, though the generations of men should be no more, and even though the sun and moon were to be destroyed. It is enough for a revelation designed for men on earth, to inform them what shall be through all generations and ages, leaving the rest to the wisdom and goodness of their great Creator, who will order all things well. And even upon the supposition that the words made use of in the promises should not naturally convey the idea of endless felicity, yet we have no reason to distrust the love and goodness of our great Creator: He will always exist, and he will always be able to make us happy in himself while he exists. And even should our *aionion* glory and happiness come

some to an end, yet if that state should be succeeded by "a glory exceeding *aionion* to an excess," (as you must know the words *kath uperbolen eis uperbolen aionion baros doxes katergazetai emin* in 2. Cor. iv. 17 may be rendered) we should sustain no damage.

There was a time when we existed in our mothers' wombs; God gave us the life we had there: the period came when that life or state ended; not in death or extinction, but in another state of life in this world; this will soon come to an end, when we hope to enter into another life, far higher and more glorious; and if that life or state shall end in what shall infinitely exceed it, we shall have no reason to complain. In the mean time, as we know positively that God shall always exist, and that the saints shall be always with the Lord; that because Jesus lives they shall live also; that they shall die no more, but possess immortality, and glory far exceeding *aionion*: I can see no kind of danger in asserting, that neither the word *aion*, nor any of its derivatives, in any of its forms whatever, neither *aionios* nor *eis tous aionas ton aionon* can signify proper eternity. And having (at least to my own satisfaction) proved that those words are connected in the New Testament with things and times that have had or shall have an end, which you so loudly challenge me to do, I have removed the great objections you have raised against the restoration, so far as to leave room to consider whether any thing can be advanced in its favour or not; for I should fully agree with you, if it could be certainly proved that *aionion* signifies *endless*, or while God exists, and was never otherwise used; for then it would be impossible for the universal restoration to be true, as the damnation of the wicked is several times called *aionion* in the New Testament.

The passage in Rev. xiv. 11. the only place where the phrase *eis aionas aionon* is certainly and expressly connected with the future misery of men, seems to confine it to the worshippers of the beast and his image, and those that receive his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands. There appears evidently a distinction in this text, but why that should be the case, if all men dying ignorant of God must suffer the same punishment to all eternity, I cannot conceive.

The smoke of their torments ascendeth up during those periods, whatever duration they intend; but as the burning world wherein they are to be tormented, is, according to the Scriptures, to be finally and completely renewed, the smoke must at last cease to ascend; and if all revolutions of time known among men are to cease and be no more, then certainly the
 revolutions

revolutions of day and night, which are better known than any other whatever. And, consequently, though these unhappy beings may have no rest *day nor night*; yet if day and night come to an end, it is not impossible but even these may be then restored.

By this very threatening we may correct a mistake that the good and great Mr. Edwards fell into, and which you yourself have adopted from him, and so frequently insist upon, viz. That the wicked shall be sentenced to their punishment at the very time when all the revolutions of time now known among men shall cease and be no more; and consequently that their misery shall endure to all eternity. The contrary is evident from this very passage, justly noted by the Rev. Mr. WESLEY, and others, as the most terrible threatening in the whole Bible. Here mention is made of *day and night*, and no intimation of their torments continuing beyond those well known revolutions.

Any person, I should think, who would candidly survey this threatening, might see that the Holy Speaker takes pains, and uses such words as avoid fixing the idea of proper eternity to this most dreadful state of misery: If he had intended to settle this controversy in favour of the doctrine of *endless torment*, this was the time and place for doing it; and he needed not have used many words for that purpose. If he had only said, "*They shall be tormented as long as God shall live*:" it would have ended the dispute at once. But instead of that, he uses a number of figurative expressions, and mentions the well known revolutions of day and night, as though he would limit their torment. His expressions are evidently of such a kind, as to contain very terrible threatenings, and yet not so as wholly to shut out the possibility of their restoration. Their being *tormented in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb*: however it may appear to others, seems to me a gracious intimation, as though both justice and mercy were intended to be displayed towards the unhappy sufferers. Their punishment is to be inflicted in the presence of holy Angels, and of the merciful Lamb; the infliction of their torment is such as these holy, happy, mild and merciful beings heartily approve of; it seems to be under their immediate direction; the unhappy criminals are not wholly given up to Devils, and cast entirely away as unworthy of any further regard from their loving Creator, and their fellow creatures, but punished immediately in their presence, as in the sight of righteous Judges, who are determined to see justice executed, but not needless cruelty; and

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who

who cannot behold, much less inflict punishment beyond the demerit of crimes,

The other passage, Rev. xx. 10. where the Devil, Beast, and False Prophet, are threatened with torment in the lake of fire and brimstone, its duration is expressed much in the same manner, *day and night (eis tous aionas ton aionon)* literally, *to the ages of the ages*. Though this is particularly threatened to the three great deceivers of mankind, the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet, yet as Christ shall sentence those on his left hand to depart "into *aionion* fire, prepared for the Devil and "his angels," I would not wish to evade the force of this threatening, though it is only by implication that the phrase before-mentioned can be here connected with the punishment of men, as they are liable to be cast into the lake of fire with the fallen angels, though I cannot be certain that men, the deceived, ought to suffer as long and painful a punishment as their deceivers. But God knows best; to his righteous judgment I would resign this, and every other matter not certainly determinable by Scripture. But as the revolutions of time, well known to men by the names of day and night, are mentioned in this dreadful threatening, your idea of fallen creatures being doomed to their punishment after all such revolutions of time are at an end, is totally without foundation, as may easily be discerned. And therefore in my turn I might call upon you to prove those premises from Scripture, from which you draw such fatal conclusions.

I have now gone through with the argument as far as the meaning of the words *aion*, *aionion*, &c. is concerned, and it will lie upon you to prove that I have mis-represented, mis-translated, or perverted their sense, or else the arguments you have built upon them, in favour of *endless damnation* must fall to the ground. As this is the principal point upon which the merits of the cause depend, I shall here close this letter, and in the following shall take notice of other arguments which you have made use of in favour of your hypothesis; and as we both profess to investigate this point for the sake of truth, and not merely for the sake of victory, I hope that no secret bias of mind will prevent either of us from discovering any mistakes that we may have fallen into; and I trust, in that case, which ever shall be convinced he is in the wrong, will shew all readiness to retract.

I hope that this controversy will be managed to the glory of God, the good of our own souls, and the welfare of those who may read our writings, I subscribe myself your sincere friend, and servant in our common Lord, &c.

P O S T S C R I P T.

SINCE I finished the foregoing letter, I have once more carefully, and I trust candidly, read over both your pamphlets upon this subject; and that I may compleat what I have to say upon this part of the subject, I will take notice of two challenges which you seem to give in your sermon and the notes: One is thus expressed:—If the blessed God had intended to have conveyed the idea of limited duration, was it not easy for him to do it by words much better adapted for the purpose, than the epithet which we translate *eternal* and *everlasting*? If, on the contrary, our all-wise teacher had designed to convey the idea of *proper eternity*, can we find a more proper epithet for the purpose, than that which he has in these places used?" Serm. page 10.

The first part of this I would answer by saying, When God gave the ceremonial dispensation, did he intend it to continue to all eternity, or even while the earth should endure, and time should last? If not, why did he call those statutes by the epithet which we translate *everlasting*? If he had intended to convey the idea of limited duration, was it not easy for him to do it by words much better adapted to the purpose, than in scores of places to call them by that very epithet which is used in *Isai lvii. 15.* to denote his proper eternity, and in many others by that word which is rendered *everlasting*, and which is in the same inspired volume frequently applied to God's existence? Let this be fairly answered. To the latter part I answer, that in my remarks I mentioned an epithet that would have certainly conveyed the idea of endless duration, and would have put the matter wholly out of dispute, if our Saviour had been pleased to have made use of it, viz. The wicked, or those who die in their sins shall be punished *while God shall exist*, or *as long as eternity shall last*. This you took no manner of notice of in your reply.

The other is what you say concerning the word *aionion*, in the notes, page 18, your words are these—"I have no inclination to offend, nor do I think it any just cause of offence, if I observe, that there is something very extraordinary in these Gentlemen. They are not satisfied with the common translation, *eternal* and *everlasting*; and yet they cannot give any other. They therefore change the English word into Greek, with an English termination, and call it *aionion punishment*. If they would be uniform, and thus change the

“ word in all passages where it is used ; we should then have
 “ *aionion* God, *aionion* glory, *aionion* life, and so on. Were all
 “ parties, who are reduced to similar difficulties, to take the
 “ same method, and to change into Hebrew and Greek in the
 “ English form such words and phrases as do not suit their
 “ respective schemes, what a singular English Bible should
 “ we have ?”

My dear Sir, if, as you say, you had no inclination to offend, yet did you not write this paragraph to render us ridiculous in the eyes of the vulgar ? Does it not tend to convey an idea that there is some hidden design in our using the word *aionion*, which we dare not avow ? I thought the word *aionion* was a pure Greek word ; I find it in the Greek New Testament in most places mentioned by you ; how then could you represent it as a word of our own coining, *Greek, with an English termination* ? When every person of the least knowledge of the language knows, and yourself among the rest, that it is the very Greek word used throughout the New Testament, and is only put in Roman or *Italic* characters instead of the Greek ? What could you have designed by this remark ? The word I retained in its original form, I confess, because of the difficulty of exactly rendering it by one English word, not from any hidden design ; the noun *aion* is easily rendered by the English word *age* ; but as the language we speak has no word formed from *age* corresponding to *aionion*, I was obliged to retain the original word, or coin a new one, which would sound uncouth ; but if the word *aion*, which is the root, be rightly translated *age*, then it is obvious that *aionion* signifies *belonging to*, or *continuing for the age*, be it longer or shorter. If I might form the word *age-lasting*, or *ages-lasting*, it would express my sense of the word *aionion*. I would always endeavour to speak in the most determinate manner, but I am not able, in all instances, to do so as fully as I could wish, owing to the ambiguity of words ; and perhaps you yourself find the same difficulty sometimes, which should teach you to have compassion on others. But notwithstanding the difficulty of rendering the word *aionion* into proper English, yet all persons may have some idea of its meaning, when they are informed of the exact meaning of the word *aion* from which it is derived. Thus if the word *aion* means eternity, the word *aionion*, as formed from it, must mean *eternal* ; but as I have shewed, from the frequent usage of words derived from it in the New Testament, that it cannot intend *always existing*, but must in many places be rendered *age*, and may in all, without the least

least absurdity, therefore the word *aion* must be understood as belonging to *age* or *ages*, even though our language has no word in use that will exactly correspond thereto.

LETTER II.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

IN my last I confined myself chiefly to the meaning of the word *aion*, and the words derived therefrom; and although, in general, striving about words is unprofitable and vain, yet in this controversy, it is absolutely necessary to take some pains in this matter, for as you rightly observe, "on one side the controversy, is decided by it." For if the word rendered *everlasting* in the New Testament, always intends *endless duration*, and is never used in any other sense in the sacred writings, (as it must not be if so weighty a point as endless damnation is to be determined by it) then it would be impossible for any argument to prove the restoration of those who die in their sins. I trust I have made the contrary to appear by the usage of the word in many passages of Scripture, and might have added many more. I shall therefore proceed in this letter to take notice of the remainder of your sermon upon this subject.

Your enquiry in the 21 page, "Whether we know of any language by which the Sacred Writers could have conveyed the idea of proper eternity, in a more full and expressive manner, supposing they had intended to convey that idea?" may be easily answered out of your sermon. You yourself dear Sir, have found out such language, as has conveyed the idea of *endless damnation* in so full and expressive a manner, that I am at no loss to know that you intended to convey that idea in your sermon, and if the sacred writers had used the same expressions (and doubtless they knew how if they had pleased) then you would never have had occasion to have written against me on this head: for I should never have believed, far less attempt to prove that they held the restoration of all mankind. For it would be impossible for any to convince me but that you

believe endless damnation, by what you have written in this sermon alone. And I suppose you seldom preach a sermon, but you make use of such expressive language as convinces all that hear you, that you believe that *endless misery* will be the portion of all who die in their sins, from which they shall never be released while God himself shall exist. I am fully of the opinion that if the Scriptures had spoken as plainly in favour of endless damnation as you have done, there could have been no dispute about it. But in all the specimens of the Apostolic preaching that we read in the book of Acts, we find not a word of *endless* nor even *aionion* damnation, and yet their preaching was very successful; a plain proof that those who preach up endless misery are not always the most successful in turning sinners from their sins, though you seem to intimate that such only are likely to be instruments of good to mankind.

If I have proved that *aionion* does not signify in itself *endless*, and that it is certainly used in the New Testament for that which is limited, then I have answered the principal part of your first book, and the doctrine of the restoration may be true, consistent with the threatenings of *aionion* punishment. Whether or not I have really done so, must be left to the serious reader's judgment.

I think that it will be difficult for you to prove that this *aioni*, and that which is to come, is perfectly equivalent with *endless duration*; could you fairly do this I would yield the point to you without further debate. But directly the contrary appears to me from the words, for this *aioni* must end, or there could be none to come, and the same word *aioni* is used for the present age, and for that which is to come. The *aioni* or age to come is to be put in subjection to Jesus our Lord, as well as the present, and he shall reign not only during the *age* to come but even to the *ages* to come, yet an end shall come, and he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Let me ask you, if it is as you say, that the *aioni* to come intends *endless duration*, how there can be any propriety in St. Paul's words when he talks of the *ages* to come, wherein God will shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Jesus Christ? If the *aioni* or *age* to come can never end, how is it possible that there should ever be an *aion* or *age* to come? But as there certainly shall be *ages* plural, to come, therefore *aioni* singular, *age*, must come to an end. And thus the force of your first passage page 24 is set aside as to its certainly proving *endless damnation*.

To your argument upon the second passage, *the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are aionion*; I answer, that it is worthy of even wisdom itself to make an antithesis between a very short period and a very long duration, though neither should be endless. What wise man would not endure a moment's inconvenience for the sake of a great advantage that he should derive therefrom, and that should endure for many years? And might he not say with great propriety, The pain and inconvenience that I shall endure is but for a moment, but the advantage shall be permanent and long that I shall derive therefrom? There is always ground sufficient for an antithesis if there is any very great difference between the opposite terms. So that I cannot see how the force and meaning of the passage is destroyed, or in the least injured, by supposing that *aionion* belongs to the age to come, and which, though it shall certainly end, sufficiently exceeds the present both in duration and glory, to afford ground for the antithesis.

I wish, with submission, to ask you a question concerning the foregoing verse 2 Cor. iv. 17, where the Apostle says "For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a glory far exceeding *aionion*," or as the original words may be rendered, exceeding *aionion* to an excess; the question I wish to ask you is this, If *aionion* in itself signifies *endless*, as you say it does in all places of the New Testament, how can any thing be said to exceed *aionion*? and especially to exceed *aionion* to an excess? Nothing can be more than *endless*, and if *aionion* means *endless*, how can it be exceeded so very far as St. Paul expresses it? And as you say that the word *aionion* refers only to duration, I would thank you to solve this which appears to me as a difficulty upon your system.

The argument which you draw from the words of your text, expressing the punishment of the wicked, and the life of the righteous in the kingdom prepared for them, I have considered before. The same words are sometimes applied in Scripture in the same passages to very different subjects, there is, therefore, no necessity of believing that all the subjects to which the same words are applied must be alike in duration. I can see no reason why the Old Testament should be erroneous any more than the New, and yet the prophet Habakkuk says in one verse, "The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow, his ways are everlasting." Hab. iii. 6. I hope we are not obliged to suppose that the hills and mountains shall endure as long as the ways of God, merely, because they are all

mentioned in the same passage, and have the same epithets applied to them.

But granting that the words intend the same in both parts of the sentence, yet as the kingdom prepared of the Father for Christ and his saints is to end, and to be succeeded by another and more glorious dispensation, as St. Paul declares, I cannot suppose that *aionion punishment* intends *endless misery*. And I must say that I have not sense enough to discern any horrid reflection that is cast upon the blessed Saviour by thus explaining the word *aionion*, any more than it is a reflection upon God to say, that when he declared that the ordinances of the Levitical priesthood should be perpetual and everlasting, he did not intend that they should *always* continue. If you can clear the character of God in one instance, from that which is too horrid to name, I make no doubt of being able, in the same way, to clear the character of the blessed Saviour. If you say that God could only intend those ordinances, &c. which are called *everlasting*, to endure to the end of that dispensation, I will say, by the same rule, that our Saviour only intended those *aionion* rewards and punishments to continue till the end of the mediatorial dispensation.

The passage you have brought out of St. John's gospel, chap. iii. 36. I have heard mentioned by several others, besides yourself, as a proof of *endless* misery: but I cannot see wherein the force of the argument consists. I know and am persuaded that *he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, while he continues in unbelief, be it longer or shorter. But surely St. John did not mean that all that were then unbelievers should always continue so; but he certainly meant to connect believing with a state of life and salvation, and unbelief with a state of death and condemnation. This we know is the case, but I cannot see any thing in this text, nor any other in the whole Bible, that limits God's work of grace upon the hearts of men to the present life. If St. John had indeed said in plain words, as you say "The connection and design of his discourse requires us to understand him, He who does not *now*, in this world, believe on the Son of God, shall never enjoy life *hereafter*." I should never have attempted to argue against it. And if you are able to point out one such plain passage in all the New Testament, (to which for brevity's sake we will agree to confine ourselves in this enquiry) I will immediately submit, and openly retract all that I have written or spoken in defence of the Universal Restoration. It seems strange that the Holy Spirit could not speak as plain and direct

direct as you can: and if his intention was so certainly to declare that the miseries of the damned should never cease during God's existence, was it not easy for him to say so, *once at least in the whole Bible?* And if there was such a passage, I think I should have heard of it before now.

That the wicked and the unrighteous shall not enter into the kingdom of God, is what I believe as fully as you do: there was no occasion for you to prove this, every person that believes the Bible must acknowledge the truth of such an evident position. But the point that you should have proved should have been, that no possible change or alteration can take place upon men after the death of the body. This would have overthrown the system of the Restoration at once. Divines in general affirm this to be true, but then they beg a question, and suppose it must be granted, which they ought to prove. For upon this one question the controversy hinges. If no change for the better can ever take place upon man after death, if he is from that time wholly out of the reach of the power of God's grace, then I am entirely wrong; and if it be so I wish to see it.

How could you venture so far as to say those declarations of holy writ *that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, &c.* "could not be true if it be the design of God to deliver the wicked from their misery, and restore them to happiness, after they have been punished for a season?" Sermon, page 29. What! do you then suppose that I believe that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God while they remain such? Prove that these expressions cannot be true, consistent with the restoration of all men, and you will carry your point. Might I not say, with as much propriety, that if any person that ever was, is now, or that ever shall be wicked, should ever to eternity enter into the kingdom of God, then those words of the Apostle *cannot be true?* This reasoning would cut off all the hopes of the living as well as the dead. According to your ideas, if God should design to deliver lost souls from their misery, he must admit them into his kingdom in their sins, and thereby falsify his word; but I believe that it is his pleasure, and that he will first deliver them from their sins, and then deliver them from their miseries. Do endeavour, in your future writings on this subject, to state my sentiments right, and do not represent that I suppose *the wicked shall be delivered from misery, and restored to happiness.* What I believe is, *that those who sometime were disobedient, shall be delivered from sin, and made capable of happiness, and that this divine process of grace upon the hearts of men is not entirely confined to the present*

present life. These are my sentiments, and when you can fairly overthrow them by Scripture, I shall freely yield them up.

I would recommend it to you and others, who write against the Restoration, to study to understand the scheme you oppose a little better, and then you will know that we believe *that the peculiar portion of those who overcome and endure to the end, shall never be given at all to any others but them, far less to the most abandoned sinner, and the vilest apostate.* The peculiar portion of those who overcome shall be *a freedom from the second death, a part in the first resurrection, a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory that fadeth not away, a seat with Christ upon his throne, power over the nations, as he received of the father.* They shall be *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; and shall reign with him on the earth, and shall inherit all things, &c.* These are such blessings as only belong to overcomers, and can never be the portion of any but those who are a kind of first fruits of God's creatures; and is not this state of glory a sufficient encouragement to avoid sin, and an abundant pre-eminence to the saints and faithful? Must God never bring in the general harvest, because he brings in some as first fruits? Has he no portion for the rest of his creatures but endless misery? Is there no medium in his plan between the highest glory and dignity of princes, and the torments of the lake of fire and brimstone while he exists? Must some, whose real character was but just one grain superior to some of the lost, be raised to the highest glories of the kingdom of God, while those who scarcely differed from them at all, shall be cast to all eternity into the lake of fire? Yet this is one of the consequences of your scheme, for between the heights of virtue and the lowest depths of vice, there are perhaps many millions of degrees, and descend by such nice gradations, that none but God's eye can discern the distinction, nor tell where virtue ends and vice begins. And as most of the human race are of mixed characters, few without some fault, and few without some virtue, and this commonly is the case, even to the hour of death, how contrary it is to reason to suppose that part of those who die with a mixture of good and evil in them, shall be instantly raised to the greatest joys of Heaven, without the least intermediate process to prepare them for such glory, and that others, but little inferior to them, shall be immediately doomed to *endless misery*, without the smallest chance of deliverance, so long as God exists.

Upon the whole, I think God may fully reward the obedience of all his creatures, and punish their disobedience, without either

either extending his rewards or punishments to an *endless duration*; and in that case it will be hard to prove that his promises to the obedient necessarily imply, that all those who die without full conformity to God, must be unavoidably miserable while God exists.

The case of Judas, about which you argue in such a tremendous manner, page 30, 31, 32, is certainly worthy of attention, and it was one of the objections which presented itself to my mind, when I began to be convinced of the universal Restoration. I have endeavoured candidly to answer it in my Dialogues on the Restoration. I have there shown, that Job, who knew that his Redeemer lived, and that he should rise to glory and immortality, and behold his God with joy; and Jeremiah, who knew himself to be called and sent of God, and that the Lord was with him as a mighty terrible one, and that his enemies should be confounded; both cursed the day of their birth, and wished that they had never come out of their mothers' wombs; and what for? Only because of worldly afflictions, which endured but for a moment, and were not worthy to be named in the same age with the miseries of Judas. I supposed that both Job and Jeremiah had an idea, that they might have existed, and been happy hereafter, if they had never been born. Certainly Job declares, that he should have been where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest; that he should have rested with Kings and counsellors of the earth, and with Princes, &c. But you think I make use of that idea as a kind of evasion to serve a turn. I can assure you I did not mean it as such, but supposed that comparing Scripture with Scripture was the most ready method of finding out the general meaning and tendency of the same.

But though you will not allow that the words of Job and Jeremiah may be compared with the words of our Saviour, yet what do you think of the words of Solomon? Did he write by inspiration, or not? He has declared, that, "If a man beget
 " an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of
 " his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and
 " also that he have no burial; I say that an untimely birth is
 " better than he. For he (the untimely birth) cometh in
 " with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall
 " be covered with darkness. Moreover, he hath not seen the
 " sun, nor known any thing: This hath more rest than the
 " other. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice-told, yet
 " hath he seen no good:" (or nothing worth being born for).

" Do

"Do not all go to one place?" (whether they have been born or not.) Eccles. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6. Here a state of great and very long prosperity in this life, is declared to be worse than the state of an untimely birth, that hath never seen the sun. A man that should live in health and ease two thousand years, and beget an hundred children, and consequently behold almost seventy generations of his descendants on earth, multiplied without number, and yet should not have his soul filled with good, contentment, or happiness, so as to be quite satisfied and pleased (and where is the man that is?) and that he should have no burial, or should not be honoured at his death, such a man, according to the word of truth, had *better* never have been born; which is a far stronger expression than our Saviour uses respecting Judas. And yet is being destitute of a burial when we are dead, any thing worthy to be compared with a moment's damnation? I leave every serious man to judge. Take your choice, either Solomon's words are not true, or our Saviour's words may be true, upon the supposition that Judas may be restored, even before he has suffered *ten thousand myriads of ages in Hell*.

Your ideas of sin and misery must greatly differ from mine, or you could not say, "If, therefore, Judas, or any other sinner, should suffer in Hell ten thousand myriads of ages, and then be restored to Divine favour, and made happy eternally, it would be infinitely better for him to have had existence, than not to have existed." I confess I had much rather never have existed, than to have been the person who should have betrayed the Saviour of Mankind, and to be doomed to the punishment of Hell for one age, let alone *ten thousand myriads of ages*.

St. Mark ix, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, is perhaps the most terrible threatening in all our Saviour's discourses, and he doubtless saw it necessary to use those most alarming expressions. I acknowledge that the word *asbestos* signifies *unquenchable*, and it is a fearful thing to fall into that fire: But let us remember, that it cannot be impossible with God to extinguish it, or cause it to cease, or to deliver men out of it, if he pleases. I may say of this fire as Jesus did respecting the rich man's entering into the kingdom of God, that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (which we all know to be a natural impossibility) than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. The disciples when they heard it were greatly astonished beyond measure, (as well they might be) and said, "Who then can be saved?" (or, What

What rich man then can be saved.) And Jesus looking upon them, saith, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: "For with God all things are possible." See St. Mark, x. 23—27. Whatever God pleases to do is possible to him, and the great things that he hath already done for the salvation of the human race are so astonishing, that I cannot doubt of his finally effecting his purpose, how impossible soever it may appear to us. But to the purpose: I have mentioned a number of passages, where God uses expressions very similar to these, concerning a number of fires which he kindled, and which he said should not be quenched, that yet are gone out long ago. See Jer. xxi. 12, Ezek. xx. 47, 48, and many other passages. True; but these passages are in the *Old Testament*. Well; what then? Surely, he that spake to the Prophets was the God of Truth, and Jesus himself could not speak more truly. Ah, but the nature of those subjects limited the expressions, for the fires kindled in the land of Israel could not be supposed to last to all eternity, because the land itself could not remain to all eternity. True; and we may further observe, that although the fires were kindled, and accomplished the purposes of God therein, according to the very meaning of his threatenings, yet they did not continue burning until our Saviour's time; nor, indeed, during the Captivity, which lasted but seventy years; for when the captives returned, they erected cities upon those very spots where those fires were kindled, which God said should not be quenched. But I must refer you to my Dialogues, where I have answered this more at large. I think our Saviour's veracity can be as easily defended, upon the supposition that Hell fire shall not burn to all eternity, as the veracity of God in threatening to kindle fires that should not be quenched, and yet suffering them to go out in a few days. If it be said, that they continued to burn until God's design in kindling them was fulfilled, the same may be said of the fire of Hell.

I think I have now noticed, and at least attempted to answer, every thing in your Sermon, until you come to the improvement: And if you are right in your premises, that *endless misery* is without controversy the plain positive doctrine of the New Testament, your conclusions will be right, and your warnings highly proper. I am a great friend to serious warnings; and, according to my view, I could use many of your expressions: But it is necessary for me to notice some things in the latter part of your discourse, before I conclude this letter.

You

You are, doubtless, well satisfied, that endless *damnation* is the doctrine of the New Testament; time was when I was perfectly so myself, (and therefore I can easily bear with you) but the time came when the evidence of the contrary doctrine appeared so plain to me, as brought me to believe it, after several years serious examination, contrary to my own darling opinions, the prejudice of education, and the opinion of all my friends, and all my prospects in life; and even though I had been a preacher of the opposite doctrine more than ten years. It is possible that you may come to think differently upon this subject. I had once as little thought of ever defending the Restoration as you have now. I am apt to think that I have rather the advantage of you, having been of your sentiments, and should have remained so until now, if the evidence in favour of the Restoration of all men had not appeared to me irresistible. It is possible that I may have expressed myself in favour of this doctrine in language that you may think is far too strong; but you will please to keep in mind that I was as it were compelled to embrace it by what appeared to me the most solid evidence. In the mean time, it sounds very strong in my ears to hear you say, that the doctrine of *endless damnation* is an "incontrovertible truth," and that, "if the Scriptures assert any thing, they most positively and frequently assert the *never-ending* punishment of those who die in an "unconverted state." These, and numerous such like passages, found in your Sermon, appear to me contrary to truth, and are calculated to prejudice your hearers against the doctrine of the Restoration, and to prevent free enquiry.

The intimations you throw out, as though we encourage men to delay repentance, and put off the consideration of future realities, and trifle with Divine threatenings, &c. and to go on in sin, trusting to be at last delivered from misery, are certainly contrary to what I endeavour to hold forth with all the seriousness I am able, warning men to flee from the wrath to come, and persuading all that I can to be earnest in seeking the Lord. Neither have I any reason to conclude that the doctrine of the Restoration leads to a life of carelessness, but quite the contrary.

Your note respecting the word *kolasis*, in page 36, naturally caused me to think that you had seen my letter to Mr. de Coetlogon, before your book was published, as the suggestion you speak of was in that piece, but since you have denied it so positively, I am at a stand, though from that and several other concurring evidences, I had not the least doubt but you had read

read my letter before your Sermon was out of the press, and accordingly I mentioned it without hesitation in my remarks; but if I said that which was false, I certainly did it ignorantly, and I sincerely ask your pardon. Though I believe when the following circumstances are calmly considered, it will be judged by most that I had some reason to think that what I wrote was true.

You had asked me more than once respecting my answer to Mr. De Coetlogon, and told me that you was going to publish, but that you wished to see my letter first: Accordingly, as soon as it was printed, I brought it with my own hands to your door, and though I did not give it to you myself, I had no doubt but you saw and read it directly. I concluded also, that you sent me your Sermon immediately upon its being published, and I did not receive it until nearly a week had elapsed after I left my letter at your house. And when I came to read your note above-mentioned, wherein you noticed what I had quoted from Mr. Petit Pierre, I imagined it more likely that you had glanced at my pamphlet than at this book, and the more so, because you say, "It has been lately suggested, " that the word *kolasis*, which, in our text, is rendered *punishment*, does not signify *punishment*, but *correction*, and *correction* is not supposed to be everlasting."

But I should not have written a single line upon this matter, being of no consequence in itself, if you had not denied to my friends that you ever saw my answer to Mr. de Coetlogon, before your sermon was published, and have proclaimed the same to the world in your six letters. Which made it necessary for me to take some notice of it, and to give the public some reasons for what I asserted, perhaps without sufficient ground. For after all it is possible, and I charitably believe, that you read the paragraph you notice in Petit Pierre's book, and not in my letter, and that my pamphlet either did not come into your hands immediately after I left it at your door, or your sermon was published several days before you sent me a copy. By any, or all of these ways, the mistake will fall upon me, and you will be clear. I am always willing to rectify any mistakes that I may inadvertently have fallen into. It was convenient for me to notice it here rather than elsewhere; and I hope I shall still learn more of a lesson which I have endeavoured to practise many years, *not to judge rashly, or according to the outward appearance*, but to suspend my judgment till I gain a knowledge of the cause.

The word *kolasis* is not very often used either in the Greek New Testament, or in the Septuagint, and therefore we must determine

determine the sense of it by other authors. The authorities quoted by Mr. Petit Pierre for the use of the word among the Greeks, I judged were very respectable, and therefore I cited them. Every one acquainted with those authors has liberty of judging for himself. But I have no objection against the word *punishment*; it is frequently used in other parts of the Scripture: And I agree with you, that the proof of the eternity of misery does not depend so much upon the meaning of the word *kolasis* as upon the word *aionion*, which I have endeavoured sincerely and faithfully to examine, and from a deliberate review of the controversy, I am for myself fully persuaded, that no such thing as absolute eternity is necessarily intended by it. But I trust to make it appear, that the doctrine of the Restoration does not depend upon criticisms upon one or two Greek words, but is a doctrine of plain truth, written upon the very face of the New Testament. And if it be not so, I will, when convinced, give it up. As I have, however, suffered much on the account of it, and which has all been in vain, if the doctrine itself is false, I will endeavour to examine the matter to the utmost of my power, and be fully persuaded that I have really made a mistake before I retract.

I think there is but one argument more in your sermon but what I have noticed, and that is respecting the infinity of sin, that it "is a crime of infinite magnitude, because God is a being infinite majesty and perfection. Every crime justly demerits punishment proportioned to its malignity! and consequently every offence against God, demerits infinite punishment. No mere creature can ever suffer an infinity of punishment in any limited duration. It follows therefore, that a sinner deserves to be *eternally* punished. Farther; every man is under infinite obligations to devote himself wholly to the service of God, his infinitely glorious creator, preserver, and benefactor. To violate, an infinite obligation, is to commit a crime of infinite malignity. A crime of infinite malignity, deserves infinite punishment. Can it ever be proved then, that everlasting is not the proper desert of a life of sin!" This is your argument in all its strength, quoted from your own words. Afterwards you add, "It is easy to sneer at any thing, if we are but prophane enough so to treat sacred truth. But I apprehend, that this argument, trite and common as it is, never was, nor ever will be fairly answered." Ser. page 39. This by the assistance of God I will endeavour fairly to answer, without *sneering* or *prophane*ness,

as I judge any thing of the kind proves nothing so much as the *badness* of the cause requiring such methods.

If sin is *infinite*, then we must ascribe to it one of the perfections of the Deity, which strikes me as something absurd, if not something worse; *sin*, a *privation*, an *act of a worm*, *infinite*? Actions must, in my opinion, take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects. Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude require infinite power to perform them. If sin is of infinite magnitude, goodness is more so, as deriving a power from God to the performance of it. But if you grant that David spoke in the name of the Mediator in Psalm xvi. you may be at once furnished with a proof, that even goodness, in the highest state in which it ever was exhibited in the world, was not considered as of infinite magnitude by the great performer. "Thou hast said unto *Jehovah*, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Ver. 2. 3. If acts of goodness were of infinite magnitude they must extend to God, but the speaker, in these words, be he who he may, David or Christ, was careful to let us know that he did not conceive his acts of goodness infinite. And if acts of goodness are not infinite, it would be highly absurd to call evil actions infinite, which proceed wholly from the creature.

I grant indeed that there is a passage of Scripture which mentions the word *infinite* as belonging to sin and iniquity, but then it is mentioned in such a connection as shews it to be used as Josephus frequently mentions it, for a very great multitude. And thus it is used by many good authors, who certainly do not mean to use it in the first and proper sense of the word. The Sacred Writer, in the passage alluded to, takes particular care to guard us against any such idea, as though sin was of infinite magnitude, or even virtuous and righteous actions, which approach far nearer to infinity, as having their source from the fountain of infinite goodness. For Eliphaz says, "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into Judgment? Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?" Job. xxii. 2—5. And language very similar to the above is used by Elihu. "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou

“ thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.” Job. xxxv. 6—7—8.

These expressions, if they teach any thing, I should think expressly declare, that no actions of men can by any mean be of *infinite* magnitude, in the sense in which we commonly understand that word; though their numbers and magnitudes may be so great as to be stiled *infinite*, as the word is sometimes used.

You assert, in consequence of your ideas of *infinite* sin, that every offence against God demerits infinite punishment. If the case be so, does it not tend entirely to take away the distinction which God hath made between sins of infirmity and sins of malice, sins of ignorance and sins of wilfulness, lesser and greater sins? All sins are offences against God, and if every offence against God is of *infinite magnitude*, how can any be greater? and thus the distinctions are entirely destroyed; and all sins will be esteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures.

If every offence against God demerits infinite punishment, then it will follow, that God cannot render to any according to their ways, nor punish them as their iniquities deserve, unless they are doomed to *endless misery*; what then will become of all those threatenings where God threatens to punish people for all their iniquities, and yet to shew favour to them afterwards? this is impossible upon your plan; for none can ever receive all the punishment due to their sins during numberless ages. Yet if the word of God be true, he can deal with transgressors as they have done, and yet be gracious to them afterwards. “ For thus saith Adonai JEHOVAH, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth; and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.—That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith Adonai JEHOVAH,” Ezek. xvi. 59, 60, 63.

Here is an instance to the purpose, of those whose sins were of the deepest die, and to whom God threatens to deal as they had done, and to punish them for all their numerous and aggravated transgressions, and yet to remember mercy for them afterwards, and to be pacified towards them for all that they had done. All which things would be absolutely impossible, according to
your

your ideas. In many other parts of Scripture God promises to render to transgressors according to their works and ways, and yet to be afterwards gracious unto them. And in one place, at least, where God is declaring the great mercies which he will manifest unto the children of Israel, in returning them to their own land, and causing them to dwell safely therein, he says, "And first, I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin *double*! because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things." Jer. xvi. 18. What do you think of this? If every offence is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, which can never be fully executed, then how can God punish a people for *all* their iniquities, and *do* to the greatest sinners *as* they have *done*, yea, and recompence their iniquity, and their sin *double* first, and then be gracious to them; and love them, and be pacified towards them afterwards? And the prophet Isaiah says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand *DOUBLE* for *ALL* HER SINS." Isai. xl. 1,—2. Here a fact is said to be accomplished, which upon your scheme can never be done to all *eternity*; for if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, none can ever have received *single* for *one* of their *sins*, far less *DOUBLE* for *ALL*.

And therefore nothing can possibly be more evidently contrary to Scripture than your trite and common argument, that as, every sin is of infinite magnitude, so it justly demerits infinite punishment, which as no mere creature can bear, must necessarily subject all who are recompensed according to their own doings to *endless* misery.

Besides, if I was to grant you, contrary to Scripture reason and common sense, that every offence is of infinite magnitude, and naturally deserves infinite punishment: How would you prove from *that* the certainty of *endless* misery? Do you make nothing of the reconciliation which our Lord Jesus has made for *all* sinners, and for *all* sins?

Let me ask you seriously, Did not Christ make a full and complete offering and propitiation for the sins of the whole world? It is not certain that his merits were far greater than the demerits of all mankind? Is he not the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world? If Christ died for all men, without exception, as you grant, and removed all their iniquities, and

bore them away, and reconciled all to God by his death while they were enemies: much more as he has paid so great a price for their ransom, he will recover them out of their lost estate, and save them by his life. "Where sin abounded, grace did
 " (or shall) much more abound. That as sin hath reigned
 " unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness
 " unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v, 20. 21.

I conclude, that let sin be ever so great, the grace of God is greater: and if you will have it that sin is of *infinite magnitude*, I hope you will not deny the propitiation of Jesus Christ, which he made for all sins, the same character. Therefore if you, magnify sin, and insist upon the greatness of its demerit, I will endeavour to magnify the all powerful Redeemer above it, and speak of his power to redeem all the human race, for whom he shed his blood. And then you will gain nothing in favour of the doctrine of endless damnation, by all your arguments founded upon the *infinity* of sin: Christ being far more infinite to save, than sin can be to destroy; and as he has undertaken to redeem and bring back those who were lost, there is no danger of his failing to perform it.

As I have now candidly gone through your sermon, and made all the answers that appear necessary to me to make to the arguments you have used in favour of *endless misery*, I shall here close this letter, and subscribe myself,

Your sincere friend, &c

LETTER III.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

HAVING in my last finished what I had to say upon your Sermon, I come in this letter to make some observations on your Six Letters to the Rev. Mr. *Boyce*. You best know why you directed your letters to that venerable Gentleman, against whom you had before written with great keenness and severity, and also why you gave only the initials of his name and place of abode. These circumstances are nothing to the merits of the cause in which we are engaged, and therefore I shall pass them over.

As I do not feel the least bitterness of spirit against you, I hope you will be disposed to give what I now write, not only a *first reading*, but a *second perusal*, before you lay it by for ever. Indeed, my dear Sir, I should not think it politic in a controversial writer, to begin by representing his antagonist as too weak to require a reply, and thus by treating him at first with contempt, lessen his own honour in conquering him. For my own part, however I may differ from you, I shall never affect to treat you either with contempt or disrespect, I acknowledge you my superior in age, natural abilities, learning, experience, &c, and, if in this contest I should be thought to gain any advantage over you, it must be owing to the goodness of the cause in which I am engaged, and by no means to my superior manner of managing it. But being at present firmly persuaded that what I hold upon this subject is the very truth of God's word, I freely enter the lists with you, and shall endeavour to vindicate what I believe; heartily wishing that wherever the truth is found, it may appear, and be received. Errors and mistakes in judgment can do us no good, and may do us harm; I would therefore sincerely wish to get rid of mine, and shall, I trust, kindly thank the friendly hand that shall shew them to me.

As your first letter only states in brief the arguments which you have more at large considered in your Sermon, and which

I have endeavoured to answer in my two foregoing letters : I shall therefore pass it over, and proceed to the second.

In your second letter you have not mentioned my name, but have spent six pages in shewing the importance of the doctrine of *endless punishment* ; and I agree that the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is highly important, and is of very great consequence, and should not only be firmly believed, but constantly realized, and always kept in view. But whether the Scriptures threaten *endless* or *limited* punishments, is the grand question between us at present, and I conceive it to be of very great importance indeed. You think I am extravagant in saying, “ No controversy of equal importance with this was ever presented to mankind.” However that may be, I do not at present recollect that I have ever said any thing *very different* from this, on other occasions, I would thank you to point out any passages in my writings, where I have represented the controversy as of *small* importance.

What I mean by this controversy being of the greatest importance to mankind, is, that it is a subject that concerns the final state of the greater part by far of all that have ever yet been born of women : for if I am right, and the *Universal Restoration* be true, it is not only *good news* to some, but the *best news* to mankind in general, that ever was or can be made known. And if you are right, the contrary is equally evident. For *endless damnation*, if true, is the *most dreadful news* to the human race at large, that is, to those that have already been born, that can possibly be told ; and in this sense the controversy becomes more important than any other.

As your third letter is properly the first which immediately concerns me, I shall lose no time, but pass to notice what you have there said, in the order in which it is written. Your Sermon on the Eternity of Future Punishment was published, as you say, “ to prevent the mischievous effects of the contrary doctrine,” which many of your friends, and yourself thought, “ were likely to be produced in some minds.”

Upon this I would beg leave to make a few short observations.

1st. Bad effects *may* follow the publication of the divine messages, as has frequently been the case. The important message given to Isaiah, and published by him to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, produced upon them the most mischievous effects, viz. It caused them to hear indeed, but understand not ; and see indeed, but perceive not : and made the heart of the people fat,
and

and their ears dull of hearing, and shut their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. See *Isai.* vi. 9, 10. And the same fatal effects followed the preaching and miracles of our Lord Jesus himself. See *St. Matt.* xiii. 13; 14, 15. *St. Mark* iv. 12. *St. Luke* viii. 10. *St. John* xii. 39, 40. But I hope you will not condemn the doctrine which Christ and his Apostles taught, because in many corrupt hearts it caused very ill effects. To some the Gospel may be a *favour of death unto death*, as well as *of life unto life* unto others. *2 Cor.* ii. 16.

2nd. I have heard it observed, that consequences are no rule of duty; the Jews apprehended our Lord, and delivered him to be crucified upon consequences, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." *St. John* xi. 48. But the way they took was far from preventing the consequences they feared.

3rd. I am glad that you have not had occasion to lament the mischievous effects already produced in some minds. As yet, for ought I can find in your book, they only exist in your fears, and in the fears of your friends, and I hope and trust they are without foundation. I have had more opportunity of seeing the effects produced by this despised doctrine, than I believe you ever had, and as yet I have never known any mischievous consequences attend believing it. But if I had, the only question should be, Is the doctrine of the Universal Restoration, a truth revealed in the word of God, or is it not? If it is there revealed, I am not to fear consequences, but boldly proclaim it in the name of the Lord.

This is what I affirm, and you deny. This is the proper state of the question. All depends upon this, if it is not found in Scripture I will give it up as soon as I can be convinced of it. We agree together respecting the rule for fixing the senses of the words and phrases. You say, "I hope he (Mr. W.) will keep to his own rules, and earnestly request him to do it. If according to these, the words be not expressive of *eternal* (say *endless*) duration, we give up the point." *Let. III.* page 16. I think that I have fairly proved, in the foregoing letters, that they do not in themselves, mean *endless duration*, and cannot without the greatest absurdity be always so understood in the New Testament. I therefore deny the premises from which you draw your consequences; for if your premises were true, that those words translated *eternal* and *for ever* and *ever* in the New Testament, always intend a proper eternity, or as long as God exists, and

were never there otherwise to be understood, then I confess it would be one of the most absurd things in the world to pretend to argue against the doctrine of *endless damnation*.

How astonishing it is that you should intimate that I am a madman, because I said as much in favour of my doctrine (as you are pleased to call it) as you did in favour of the doctrine of endless misery; for my words are just the same as yours, *mutatis mutandis*. I believe your assertion will be as likely to astonish some, as mine may others. You believe that no man ever went so far before me. I assure you, Sir, I have heard some go much farther, even I have heard them say that they could see the Universal Restoration almost in *every page* of the Bible. I do not even pretend to see it in *every book* in the New Testament; but if I find it in any of them it is enough for me; for *no lie is of the truth*; or found in the Sacred Oracles.

Your so often asserting, both in conversation and in print, that I passed by all your arguments without so much as ATTEMPTING to answer one of them; is almost as extraordinary as any assertion that I ever heard from any serious man in my life.

Let all that read your Sermon and my Remarks, judge whether I have not at least attempted to answer you in several instances. I did not however mean, in these Remarks, to give a regular answer to what you had written, but only to make a few observations as they occurred to my mind. I referred to my answer to Mr. de Coetlogon, and in that I referred to my Dialogues on the Restoration, where I have attempted to answer all the arguments in your Sermon, and many others, more than you have mentioned. I did not conceive that my Remarks alone were a sufficient answer to your Sermon, but I thought my Dialogues contained what might be judged an answer to all you had advanced upon the subject of *endless misery*.

I come now to take notice of the acknowledgment which you say my Remarks begin with, and which seems to afford you matter of great triumph, and which you continue to remark upon to the end of your third letter.

“Mr. W. begins his remarks with a very considerable acknowledgment.” He says, “The threatenings of *everlasting fire, everlasting destruction, eternal damnation, eternal fire, and everlasting punishment*—would have settled the point with me, as much as with him, notwithstanding all the instances of the words being used in a limited sense in the Bible, did I not find express promises in the same book, &c.”

From this quotation, and your remarks upon it, you would wish to represent me as not only inconsistent with myself, but that

that what I say tends to operate powerfully against the inspiration of the New Testament.

How so? I suppose there is a necessity of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and taking a view of all that is said upon both sides of a subject, in order to discover the truth.

The doctrine of the *Resurrection* is a truth of very great importance, and without it Christianity would be no more than a fable; yet the following passages of Scripture would have settled the point with me, that the dead would never rise again, had I not found express promises that they should rise at the last day.

Job. vii. 9. "As the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." Ver. 21. "For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou (O thou preserver, or observer of men) shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be."

Chap. x. 21. "Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death."

Chap. xiv. 7—12. "For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the strength of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not till the Heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Ver. 14. "If a man die, shall he live again?"—(N. B. Those questions in Scripture are generally, if not always, used strongly to express the negative.)

Ver. 18, 19, 20. "And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place: The waters wear the stones; (which never grow again) thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth, &c."

Would not every person of common sense judge by reading these and many other such like passages alone, that there never was to be any resurrection of the dead? Do not all the comparisons here used strongly express that idea? But when we read further, we find the same person expresses his firm belief in the *Resurrection*. Chap. xix. 23—27. "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

"That

“ That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me.”

This passage entirely corrects the mistake that otherwise we should have fallen into, from reading the fore-cited paragraphs, and teaches us the necessity of explaining them with such limitations as may reconcile *them* to *this*, and not bring down *this* to *those*.

We must qualify the expressions, by setting limits to the time of the long sleep of death, and the destruction of man in the grave.

There is nothing more plainly taught in the general tenor of Scripture than the justice of God, and that he makes a wide difference between the righteous and the wicked, that he *rewards* the one, and *punishes* the other: Yet I should have thought the contrary, if I had never read any other Scriptures upon the subject but the following.

“ All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.” Eccles. ix. 2.

This text viewed alone without reference to any other, would have settled the point that there is no difference between the most righteous and the most wicked man, either in themselves or in God’s estimation, or in his conduct towards them. But read the whole Book through, and we shall find directly the contrary maintained, in the strongest and most expressive language.

Chap. viii. 12, 13. “ Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.”

Chap. xii. 13, 14. “ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man.” (All his duty, business, safety, and happiness; his present joy, and prospect of the future.)

“ For

“ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

This language teaches us that there is, and must be an amazing difference between the righteous and the wicked; and consequently teaches us the necessity of explaining the fore-cited words with precaution and limitation. In some instances in the present life, there appears no difference between God's conduct towards the just and the transgressor, between his mercies granted to the most pious and the most profane; but in the future state the difference will be great indeed.

We are commonly taught, and the nature of Divine Revelation requires us to believe, that *man is far superior to the beasts*, and is formed for immortality; but the following Scripture is so express to the contrary, (unless explained with considerable limitation) that it would have settled the point with me, unless I had read other passages upon the subject. Eccles. iii. 18, 19, 20. “ I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: As the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath: so that a man hath no pre-eminence above the beast: For all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

We are plainly taught in several parts of Scripture, that there will be a *dissolution of the Earth and Heavens*, or atmosphere; and St. Peter assures us, that it shall be by fire and fervent heat; and yet from the following passages of Scripture, I should have concluded directly the contrary; and so must you and all candid Readers, unless the words are explained with some limitation.

Psal. civ. 5. “ Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.”

cxlviii. 6. “ He hath also established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass.”

Eccles. i. 4. “ One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: But the earth abideth for ever.”

Once more: Are there not many passages of Scripture, that, taken by themselves, without viewing them in connection with others, that would cause people to believe, that our Lord Jesus was *only a mere man*, and which in fact have led many thousands to believe so of him; but when we come to examine
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the Scriptures at large, you and I are fully persuaded, that he is *God manifest in the flesh*, and that he is the very person who spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, &c. From all these instances, and many others that might be mentioned, it is clear that a subject viewed by itself appears in quite a different light, than when it is beheld in connexion with other parts of the grand system.

And thus I continue to acknowledge, that if I had found nothing in the Bible more contrary to the doctrine of *endless damnation* than those terrible threatenings that we have quoted from the Scriptures, I should have rested satisfied with the ideas in which I was brought up, as well as you, and should never have suspected but the word *aionion* intended *endless duration*; but finding those expressions in the Scriptures, that appeared to me totally repugnant to the doctrine of *endless misery*, I was led to examine those words and phrases which I had supposed contained the same, and I found they were fairly capable of a more restricted and qualified meaning than I had before put upon them. And by reading and comparing one Scripture with another, (which is my invariable rule for understanding the Bible) I found the words often used in a limited sense, and I was either obliged to understand them so when they were applied to future misery, or entirely set aside what appeared to me to be intimations and promises to the contrary. This was the manner of my proceeding, the result of which was a full and firm persuasion, and a hearty belief of what you call a *dangerous error*; but which appears to me, and some *few others*, a glorious Gospel truth, of great magnitude and importance.

You seem to think that the threatening of God that men shall have no intervals of ease in their torments, would be "a poor languid denunciation, insignificant, unworthy of God, and inefficacious on the minds of men!" In that case, it is evident, that God would never have threatened a punishment of that kind, and whether the torments of the damned are *endless* or *limited*, the idea of their being *without cessation* would never have been added. But it is very evident, that God's thoughts (in this instance at least) are not your thoughts, neither his ways your ways: For he has most certainly threatened *ceaseless punishment* without intermission, in those words, Rev. xiv. 11. "And they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image," &c. Surely, this is intended as a great addition to their misery, though you seem to think it is none at all.

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But I must hasten to survey your fourth Letter. And here I find that those passages which to me appear to contain gracious intimations and promises of mercy and salvation to all men, do not appear to you in any such light.

Ephes. i. 10, Col. i. 20, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. do not strike you as containing any thing like promises or prophecies, but only a declaration of a simple fact, "That God had raised his Son to be the head of the universe, according to his former purpose." I can hardly see wherein this differs, if rightly explained, from what I hold; but whatever was the fact declared in these words, it had not then taken place, because St. Paul speaks of it as the *mystery* of the will of God, made known to his chosen, *according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself*; but not yet performed; for then it could not be a mystery. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." This amazing and glorious work was so far from being mentioned by St. Paul as a fact that had then taken place, that he speaks of it as a great instance of God's abounding towards them in all wisdom and prudence, that he had even revealed this to his Chosen; the full accomplishment of which was reserved for the dispensation of the fulness of times. And though Christ was raised long before St. Paul wrote this epistle, and was exalted at the right hand of the Father, and all things were in the purpose of God put under his feet, yet not actually so, as he tells us in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ii. 8, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet: For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."

All things are without exception in the Divine purpose put under Christ, and he is appointed the head of the universe, but it is not yet actually fulfilled, and consequently remains to be accomplished in the fulness of times. And therefore this passage is to all intents and purposes as much a prophecy not yet fulfilled, as any one in the Bible, and as such was made known in a way of extraordinary favour to St. Paul, and through him to the first Gentile believers. And of course the Apostle's words contain an express promise (as all prophecies do) since they speak of a very important fact that God had revealed, which then had not been accomplished, neither is it yet to come to pass; but when it shall, I have all the reason in the world to believe, that all intelligent beings, whether in
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Heaven or earth, shall willingly submit to Christ as their head, and shall rally under his standard, and be re-headed in him; which is the very thing that I contend for, and I can hardly see how any words could possibly be more to my purpose.

In Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11, the words are of the same kind, viz. an important prophecy, not yet fulfilled, "That at (or rather ~~in~~) the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in ~~Heaven~~, and things in earth, and things under the earth; "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is ~~Lord~~, to the glory of God the Father."

Nothing can be more evident, than that these words are a prophecy, for that no such event has ever yet taken place, is too evident to admit of any dispute. Thousands and thousands of millions are as yet in a state of actual rebellion against him; and however the blessed inhabitants of Heaven bow in his name, and acknowledge him Lord, to the glory of God the Father; yet most of the inhabitants of the earth are either ignorant of him, or bitterly opposed to him. And what shall we say of those that are under the earth, in their graves; who lived and died most of them estranged from him, or at enmity with him? Yet the promise made to Jesus, that *he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; and that every knee shall bow, and tongue confess*, extends to those on earth, and under the earth, as well as to those in Heaven. And since all are as it were placed together, adoring and praising Jesus, who shall dare eternally to exclude them from his salvation?

Col. i. 20, speaks of all things being reconciled to God, by him who made peace through the blood of his Cross; whether things on earth, or things in Heaven.

If I know the meaning of the word *reconcile*, it is not only to bring into a state of *subjection*, but *amity and love*. It would be very absurd to pretend that all things have ever been actually reconciled to God, while so many yet remain at enmity against him. But this *event* is certainly predicted, you may call it a *simple fact*, if it is most agreeable to you, but it is such a fact, as never yet has been seen by man, it is done in the counsel of Heaven, and must be actually compleated in due time; for Christ has already reconciled all, and made universal peace by the blood of his cross; and I must think, that if the precious blood of Christ was shed for *all* without exception; then certainly *all must be saved*, or restored by his intercession. This passage then appears to have the substance of a prophecy, since it mentions as a fact what has not yet taken place, which is the

the common style of prophecy: And as God will perform whatever he intimates, the actual reconciliation of every creature to God seems certain from this plain text; for what else can it mean? Thus Christ is not only represented in these three passages as being appointed to be the head of the universe, but (what is indeed included therein) the whole universe, or all its intelligent inhabitants, shall submit to him, adore him, confess him their Lord, be by him reconciled to God, and shall rally, and be re-headed under their glorious and rightful Sovereign, Jesus Christ, who is the head of all principality and power.

When I consider these three passages, (although they are far from being the only supports of the doctrine of the *General Restoration*) I cannot help thinking the ground good on which I stand in this cause, and cannot see the least necessity of relinquishing it at present.

That God, "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. if it is not formally a promise, is such an intimation of his design to save all, and as the mean, to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, as ought to have made you pause a little, and prevented your getting over it so easily. I have the happiness to believe in a God who is infinite in power, as well as in wisdom and goodness, and I have no doubt his counsel shall stand, and that he shall perform all his pleasure. "He doeth according to his will in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?" Dan. iv. 35. And however the will of God may be resisted for a time, I dare not say that it shall be finally frustrated, I cannot believe so, let who will or who can. I trust all men shall be at last what God at first willed them to be, and that was to be holy and happy.

The vision that St. John beheld and heard, which you get over so easily, by denying that it contains any express promise, appears to me to be worthy of a little more attention than you seem to pay to it.

Rev. v. 13. "And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

If St. John was not deceived, he saw and heard, in vision, what shall take place in fact and reality. He saw and heard the whole creation praising God and the Lamb, all intelligences

gences ascribing blessing and honour, and glory and power; and so distributively are they mentioned, *every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them*, that none can be excepted. John was shewed those things that were to be fulfilled from his time to the end of the Mediatorial Dispensation, therefore whatever he saw and heard must come to pass; this part of the vision has never yet taken place, for every creature in the universe as yet has not ascribed praise to God and the Lamb, neither can they, while they continue in rebellion, or torment. Therefore, unless this is a lying vision, there must be an end to both. It is no matter what follows in the book, for all that follows must be accomplished, as well as this, but *this* as well as every thing else must come to pass. I acknowledge that the wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire, but I must of necessity consider their punishment there as *limited*, or else explain away the meaning of this glorious vision; for if *endless damnation* be a truth, then *every creature* shall never adore God and the Lamb. But on the contrary, if the punishment they are to endure is limited, then all the vision may be true. And this is the medium I always wish to seek after, so to explain one passage, as as not to make it contradict another. I cannot see therefore that the threatenings being found written in the book of Revelations, after this vision, tends in the least *on my own principles* to refute the doctrine of *Universal Salvation*: Since, if this vision is certainly true, it either has been, or must be fulfilled; but that it never hath been, is evident to all; and what is more, it never can be accomplished, if *endless damnation* be a true doctrine. I desire, therefore, in your next, that you will shew how it is possible for *every creature* in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, &c. with one heart and one mouth to give blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever; if many of them are to remain to all eternity in a state of enmity against God, and in the most amazing torments that can be imagined.

You will please to observe, that *sorrows, pains, and tears*, never were, nor can be, in the New Jerusalem; and therefore it would be nothing to inform us of that. I never intimated that any of the damned should be citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; but when you can give a sufficient reason why this holy and heavenly city shall descend from God out of Heaven, unless for the sake of others, besides those who shall inhabit the same, I shall be glad to be instructed; for I can see no reason

reason why this city should change its situation, unless for the good of mankind in general, who had been cast off. And whoever will be at the pains critically to observe what is said upon the grand occasion of the descent of that holy city, are heartily welcome to *make their advantages by exposing me*, if they will first be kind enough to read with candour the exposition that I have written in my Dialogues and Lectures upon this passage of Holy writ.

Rev. xxi. 3, 4, 5. "And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: For the former things are passed away."

I cannot see how it can be proved to be an absurdity to say, that these expressions are general. The tabernacle of God is evidently the New Jerusalem, and it comes down to be with *men*; this is a common or general name, and can hardly be exclusively applied to the inhabitants of the heavenly city, especially as the city descends to visit men; but not surely to be with its own proper inhabitants, who dwell there for ever, and for their sakes it need not be removed. As for tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain, it is not barely said that the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem shall be free from them, but that they shall exist *no more*, without mentioning any place: But if these are to remain any where, while God exists, it never will be true that *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*. Had it been added, *in the heavenly city*, it would have been something to your purpose; but the word *men* is the antecedent, instead of the *New Jerusalem*. And therefore it must be understood, *And there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain* (amongst men). Let the passage be fairly examined, and I am willing to leave it to the impartial Public to determine, whether the words do not much more naturally apply to other *men* than to the *inhabitants of the New Jerusalem*. And if it be granted that an end shall be entirely put to *death, sorrow, crying, and pain*, according to the plain literal sense of the passage, then, of consequence, the doctrine of endless misery must fall to the ground.

If he that sitteth upon the Throne promiseth to make *all things new*, and calls us to behold, and see that he actually

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performs it, I might in my turn charge you with making an *assertion that will astonish many of your Readers*, when you think, *certainly all men must not be included in this description*. I might just as well say, when the Scripture informs us, that *God is the former of all things*, that *all men are not included in this description*. If once a door is opened to explain away the meaning of the word ALL, when used in doctrinal matters in the Scriptures, there will be no end of the confusion and uncertainty occasioned thereby. For by the same rule one may deny that *God made ALL men*, another may deny that he *preserves ALL men*, and another deny that *Christ died for ALL men*, &c.

Threatenings and promises are so intermixed in the Scriptures, that no conclusive argument can be drawn from the circumstance of one following the other; both must be accomplished; but if the punishment of mankind is never to end, I can see no truth in the promise, that *all things shall be made new*, and that *there shall be no more death*, &c. For if men are to all eternity to continue under the power of the *second death*, in pain, sorrow, weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, and the utmost torments of fire and brimstone, I can see no truth in saying, that these evils shall be no more, since it is certain, upon your plan, they must exist as long as God shall live, and if not in the heavenly city, yet still they must exist; which is directly opposite to the words which declare *they shall be no more*.

Towards the close of your Fourth Letter, you express your wish, that I would "take sufficient time and pains to place every thing in the strongest possible point of light." This is a task, indeed, that requires greater abilities than mine, and more time than I have to bestow; and besides, it would oblige me to write a large volume; and the certain expence attending the publication of large works, and the uncertainty of mine, at least, meeting with a ready sale, is at present sufficient to deter me. But to answer your wish in part, I have, in the fifteenth number of my Lectures, given a little specimen of the Scripture passages which I suppose favour the *Universal Restoration*, and have briefly given my thoughts upon them. I intend that number to accompany this to you; and when you shall fully answer all I have there written (though but a small part of what I might say upon this glorious subject) I shall freely resign the field to you, and endeavour to atone, by an open confession, and renunciation of my errors, for all the mischief that I have done or occasioned. For I can, in the fear of God, assure you, that I have the greatest possible aversion to doing mischief,

chief, and the utmost wish and desire to promote the present and future welfare of my fellow-creatures, as far as it is in my power.

As this, I trust, is your wish as well as mine, I hope we shall agree in far more points than those in which we may happen to differ. With this comfortable persuasion I shall conclude this Letter, and subscribe myself,

Your's, &c.

LETTER IV.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

CONTROVERSY is what I am but a very little accustomed to; for, except my letter to Mr. De Coetlogon, my Remarks upon your Sermon, and these present Letters, I never attempted an answer to any that ever wrote against me, or the system that I hold. I had almost once determined never to enter into a personal contest with any man or men, but rather suffer them to keep the field, and let them go away with the cry of victory on their side, than to enter the lists with them. For I was more afraid of myself than I was of my antagonists; I feared lest I should in any instance return railing for railing, or that a spark of wrath, pride, or contempt, should arise in my heart while defending what appeared to me to be the truth of God. And I considered it a *million* times better that my name and character should be trampled under foot, and despised, than that my soul should be hurt by any of those evil tempers before-mentioned, the innocent cause of Religion be reproached through my means, the name of that God whom I profess to love and serve, be dishonoured, and fresh cause of stumbling given to mankind. Had *pride* and *self-importance* been my ruling passions, and could I have so far forgotten a future judgment, as to give up myself to write
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and publish *known falsehoods*, it is hardly likely that I should patiently have borne, for more than eight years, all the attacks that were made and levelled against me, without ever taking the least notice of them. And I can safely say, that I am moved to reply to you, not for *my own credit*, nor profit's sake, but the good of mankind, and the satisfaction of my friends; and if you think proper to notice and answer all that I have written upon the subject, I am willing to continue a friendly correspondence with you in the controversial form, until either the one or the other is convinced, or our friends on both sides are content that the matter should rest; with this condition for the future, that whatever we write shall be directly addressed to each other, and shall be written in perfect good humour, or in the spirit of love.

The first part of your Fourth Letter I need not take up much time upon, as in my First Letter I have attempted to do what you require, respecting the meaning of the words rendered *everlasting*, *eternal*, and *for ever and ever*.

You say, that you "Can see nothing like the doctrine of " Universal Restoration in any one passage mentioned by me," and " That no such thing is positively *asserted* in the Bible is " manifest to all mankind." Page 28. Not to *quite all mankind*: For it is not manifest to me; but, on the contrary, the *assertions* appeared to me so many, so plain, so positive, as convinced me of the truth of the doctrine, contrary to many powerful prejudices, and great obstacles, that stood in my way.

Universal Restoration is nothing else but the "*Restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his " holy Prophets since the world (or age) began." Acts iii. 21. Here it is positively asserted in so many plain words, and declared to be the concurrent doctrine of all God's holy Prophets from the beginning.

The declaration of St. Paul, that " The creature itself also (spoken of as distinct from the children of God, or the first fruits of the Spirit) " shall be delivered from the bondage of " corruption (and what can that be but sin and its consequences?) into the glorious liberty of the children of God:" (which is a state of perfect holiness and happiness;) is a positive assertion of the *Universal Restoration*; or, to speak it exactly in the identical words of Scripture, *the Restitution of all things*. And so with ease I could produce you many more passages, wherein this doctrine is *positively* asserted, or plainly implied. At least it appears so to me.

You

You seem sometimes to find fault with me for saying, "I think," and "I think not;" and elsewhere censure me for want of modesty, and for being too bold and assuming. I sincerely do not wish to give the smallest offence by my manner of speaking, and yet it appears that I do. What must I do in this case? What words must I use? If I say, "I believe," or, "I believe not," I am told, "It is nothing to the purpose without further evidence." Well, dear Sir, do not I mention the evidence which causes me thus to believe? Can you do more, than to set forth what you believe, and the ground of the same? Can you force mankind to see with your eyes? How could you say that I give no reason for my thoughts? I brought texts of Scripture, which to me appeared full and pertinent to my purpose, and upon a serious review appear so still. What better reasons do you give for your thoughts, than those passages of Scripture which to yourself plainly appear to support them? In this Letter you are again surprized that I acknowledge that the threatenings taken apart by themselves seem sufficient to cause us to expect *endless misery* to be the portion of the wicked, and enquire, "How then can prophecies" or promises establish a contrary sentiment?" I have answered this in my last Letter, and have there mentioned a number of instances, and might add several more, wherein I should have thought quite different upon several very important points, by only taking some texts apart by themselves.

Puff and banter I hate as much as you can, if I know my own heart; and would be ready to condemn my writings to the flames, if I could perceive that the cause in which I am engaged required any thing that has the appearance of those detestable qualities.

You grant that Christ died for all without exception, but you cannot believe that all for whom he died shall be finally saved or restored. You ask, "Is it not written upon the face of the New Testament that though Christ died for all, yet believers only shall have eternal life?" I answer; That Christ has power given him *over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all that the Father hath given him.* St. John xvii. 2. And I trust I am able to prove, (if Scripture words mean any thing) that *all* were given him without exception. And all shall be finally taught of God, so as to come to Jesus Christ. St. John vi. 45. And coming to him they shall be saved by him. Nothing can be more evident than that the Apostle Paul founds salvation upon the death of Christ, if that was partial, salvation is partial, of consequence, but if that was ge-

neral, and for all without exception, (as you grant) it will be hard to overthrow the *Restitution of all*. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Can those be doomed to endless pain, for whom God gave his darling Son to die? Does not God, by the Prophet Isaiah, say, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, (or the multitude) for he shall bear their iniquities?" Is it not evident that his bearing their iniquities is the foundation of their justification? and will Christ be satisfied by reclaiming from their perverse ways a small part of those whom he purchased with his agonies, pains sufferings and precious blood? Reason, as well as Revelation, forbids the idea. I hope never to give up that faith in the blood of Jesus, which assures me of the final Restoration of all for whom he made reconciliation. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life." Rom. v. 10. That is, if when we only stood in the relation of fallen creatures, and enemies to God, he so loved us as to give his Son to die for us, and thus brought us to stand in a much nearer relation to himself than we did before, even, in the relation of redeemed creatures; how much more certainly shall he save us from our sins and miseries at last by Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us! It could hardly have been supposed before, that God could have had so great a love to fallen creatures, as to have given his beloved Son to be their ransom; but having given him to die for their sins, there is the fullest reason to believe that he never will finally and to eternity forsake and cast them off, (though for a season he may) but will compleat the great work that he hath begun, even their deliverance from sin and its consequences. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall (the same) many be made (or become really and truly) righteous." Ver. 19. The ruins of our fallen state have been wide and dreadful, but the triumph of Jesus shall be greater in our perfect recovery. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Ver. 20. That is, it shall, for God, with whom this is certain, speaks of it as already done; for he can call things that are not as though they were. And therefore as finally grace must abound more than sin, it must be as extensive, and more powerful; and consequently must reclaim all the fallen race. For every one left to all eternity under the power of sin, must render grace so much

much less in its aboundings than sin. It is in vain to attempt to get over this important passage by saying that *it is so with some*, this is a mere subterfuge. For supposing there was a city, whose inhabitants had been rich and happy, all of them, and had fallen into a state of great want, misery, and poverty; and by some means a few should chance to rise to greater opulence and happiness, than before, while the bulk of the citizens should continue as poor and distressed as ever, and be constantly growing more and more so; could any one with the least appearance of truth affirm, that *where poverty and misery abounded, riches and happiness much more abounded?* and what should we think of such an one, if in confirmation of what he delivered as a fact, (though a most evident falshood) he should point out a small number, who seemed in a comfortable situation, while by far the greater part were in the utmost state of wretchedness? We should, I presume, generally think that he meant to add insult to falshood.

As for those for whom Christ died being destroyed and perishing, I freely grant it, for so the Scripture declares, and I believe, but then Jesus cannot finally lose them, for it is the Father's will that of all which he hath given to Christ he should lose nothing; and this will of the Father he hath engaged to perform. And though he has a just right to deal with all his ransomed ones according to his pleasure, appointing them a short state of probation on earth, and then rewarding or punishing them according to their works; yet will he bring them all at last to a state of subjection and actual reconciliation to God, and re-head them all in himself. And this I take to be the very meaning of St. John xii. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." Now I do not expect that you will quibble about the meaning of the word *all*, as some do, and therefore the only dispute between you and me, is what the sense of the word *draw* may be. It must be something worthy of the death of Christ to gain, and something that otherwise he could not have obtained. And I must confess, for my part, I can see nothing worthy of the bitter death of so glorious a person as the Lord Jesus Christ, and which could not have been obtained without that event, but the *salvation* of men. See Lecture xxxii. Where I have treated the subject more at large.

The next paragraph in your Letter I shall transcribe at large, and then the several passages alluded to, and compare them, and endeavour to give them a *little serious examination*; and if that demolishes my hypothesis, I shall join you in calling it

shadowy, and immediately quit it, for any thing better that you can shew me.

“ Mr. W. slides over John vi. 37, compared with iii. 35, xvii. 2, in his usual manner, without any comment, or any proof; as if it were universally taken for granted, that all these texts are parallel. Now he knows that they are universally understood to be very different in signification; and he knows that the *expressions* are very different. If he had no decent respect to the sense, learning, or piety, of all the Commentators in the world, and of all mankind, ought not reverence for the infinitely glorious Author of these different expressions, who never speaks at random, to have prevailed with him, at least to have given these passages a little serious examination? A very slight examination, indeed, would have been sufficient to demolish this shadowy support of our author’s hypothesis.” Page 30.

This, dear Sir, is a very heavy charge against me, and represents me as totally depraved in judgment, or what is worse, ranking texts together that *I know* are universally understood to be very different in signification, and where I know the *expressions* are very different. Truly, I do not know any such thing, but believe just the contrary, that the expressions are similar, or nearly so. You intimate, that I have neither decent respect to the sense, learning, and piety, of all the Commentators in the world, and of all mankind; nor reverence to the infinitely glorious Author of these expressions.

Blessed Jesus, I appeal from the judgment of this thy servant, to thy more impartial judgment. Thou that knowest my heart, knowest that I have the highest reverence for thee, and for thy words. It is but a very small thing for me to be judged of man’s judgment; for he that judgeth me is the Lord.

How ~~not~~ even good men are to judge, censure, and condemn each other? It was so with Job and his three friends; and it is too much so in the present time.

I will now place these several passages together, and see if the *expressions* are so very different as you represent, and say, that *I know*.

St. John vi. 37. “ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” Chap. iii. 35. “ The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.” xvii. 2. “ As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him,” (or, to all.)

Wherein does the amazing difference of these expressions consist? In all of these texts, the Father is the giver, and the Son,

Son, Jesus Christ, is he to whom he giveth. In the first mentioned passage, our Lord declares, that all that the Father giveth him shall come to him, and that must be allowed without exception. In the second, we have the testimony of John the Baptist, that, "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." To the same purpose we have the words of our Lord himself, St. Matt. xi. 27. St. Luke x, 22. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." And also the testimony of St. John the Evangelist, chap. xiii. 3. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God."

In the other passage, we find our Lord, in his prayer to the Father, asserting the fact, that God had "given him power over all flesh;" and subjoining the reason or design, viz. "that he should give eternal life to all that the Father had given him." It would be highly absurd to say, that *all things* did not include *all men*; especially, since our Saviour explains *all things*, by the words *all flesh*, and their being *given him*, by his having power *over all*, that so he might *give eternal life to all*.

Now, upon a fair review, and *serious consideration* I must still continue to believe, that these are parallel passages, until you convince me otherwise. There are but a few instances in Scripture where such a number of texts bear such evident marks of being parallel. I can see no difference at all in their sense and meaning, and very little even in the expressions.

The difference between *given* and *giveth*, *given into his hand* and *given him power over*, seems the chief, and this in Scripture language is generally nothing at all; for the present, and even the past tense, is put for the future: *I have made thee a Father of many nations*. Gen. xvii. 5. Rom. iv. 17. *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given*. Isai. ix. 6.

But although the passages quoted above seem to me all to relate to the same thing, yet I do not wonder that all who deny the *Restitution of all things*, should endeavour to separate them; for once allow them the privilege of coming together, and looking upon and explaining each other, and their united evidence is so powerful in favour of the *Restoration*, that it cannot be withstood.

However weak and shadowy you may think this support to be, I shall just fairly state it, and leave it to the serious consideration of my readers, both your friends and mine, who, as I hope, will do themselves the justice candidly to read both sides of the question.

First,

First, All things, without exception, are given by the Father to the Son, delivered to him, given into his hands, and he has universal power over all flesh.

Secondly, The design of this is, that he might give eternal life, even the knowledge of the Father and himself, to all those that the Father hath given him; which certainly includes all mankind without exception.

Thirdly, Not only the intention of the Father in giving Jesus power over all flesh was, that he might give eternal life to all, but Jesus engages that all that the Father giveth him shall come to him; yea, shall certainly come to him in such a manner as not to be cast out; that is, they shall come humbly, willingly, and sincerely, and shall submit to him; and shall be recovered from their lost state. This he declares to be the very will of the Father, which he came down from Heaven to fulfil, and that he will accomplish it entirely at last. And it is the Father's will, who hath given him *all things*, that of all which he hath given him, Jesus should lose nothing, but should raise it up, or restore it at the last.

And though all men are naturally in a lost state, yet the Son of Man came to seek and save those that are lost. And even though many of those for whom Christ died shall be so unhappy as, through their own folly, to suffer amazing loss in a future state, and be lost themselves, yet shall Jesus finally restore them, because he can lose nothing of all the Father gave. But if any are to be annihilated soul and body, or what is worse, to be endlessly miserable, then must all such, who were given to Christ, be lost finally, and never brought back to God, nor recovered from their ruined state; which would be directly contrary to the express words of Christ. If any should object, that none can come to Christ except they are drawn by the Father, and therefore, as he may not draw the *whole*, only a *part* may come; our Lord immediately answers this objection by quoting the words of the Prophets, which he applies generally, *And they shall be all taught of God*, and further assures us, that every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh to him; and consequently all that shall hereafter hear and learn of him, shall come to Christ. And as ALL shall be taught, ALL shall come; and whosoever being taught of the Father, (as all shall be) and coming to Christ in consequence (as all shall do who are thus taught and drawn by the Father) shall be graciously received by him, and shall in no wise be cast out, but be saved by his grace.

Do

Do I say, these things as a man? Or, is it not the plain obvious meaning of these passages? For instance, let any candid person be first made acquainted with those texts, that declare, that *all things were delivered to Christ, given into his hand, and that he hath power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to all that the Father gave him*; and then let them read St. John vi. 37, 38, 39. 44, 45. and try if they can understand the matter in any other light than I have laid it down, supposing that before they had not embraced any particular system.

“ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and
 “ him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I
 “ came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the
 “ will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will
 “ who hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I
 “ should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last
 “ day.

“ No man can come to me, except the Father who hath
 “ sent me draw him: And I will raise him up at the last day.
 “ It is written in the Prophets, And they (*i. e.* men) shall be
 “ all taught of God: Every man, therefore, that hath heard,
 “ and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”

I shall leave these passages, without any further comment, to the serious consideration of all who may read these Letters; and pass to your next paragraph.

In this place you say, “ His fourth reason is from 1 Tim. ii. 4, compared with Eph. i. 11, Dan. iv. 35, 1 Tim. iv. 10. But, as usual, not a word of explanation, or proof; though neither he, nor any man alive, can see a tittle of Universal Restoration *asserted* in them; and very few besides himself, ever saw it *implied* in them.”

Let us set down all these passages, and see what they assert. 1 Tim. ii. 4. “ Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Ephes. i. 11. “ Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Dan. iv. 35. “ And he doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

1 Tim. iv. 9, 10. “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”

Now

Now let it be fairly examined, whether the Universal Restoration is not *asserted* in these words, taken altogether. If God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; if this is his fixed purpose, and if he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; and if he doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, *What doest thou?* And if it is really a faithful and true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that the living God is the Saviour, or restorer of all men, specially of those that believe. If all these things are true, I cannot think the General Restoration appears only like a deduction, or bare implication, but that it is plainly *asserted* upon the very face of these passages compared together. For if God's will is finally absolutely incontrollable; and his will is that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and if he is the restorer of all men, SHALL NOT ALL MEN BE RESTORED? Is God the doer of that which shall never be done? Which must be the case, if he is the restorer of all men, and yet that all men shall not be restored.

In answer to your question, "Are we authorized to make our feelings the rule of Divine proceedings?" I answer, No; but yet when God by his grace puts those tender compassionate dispositions into hearts that before were destitute of them, and gives strong desires for the salvation of all men to his children, it is to be supposed he inspires them with his own disposition, and that what they have is but as a small drop from the boundless ocean of Love. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 16.

In the close of your fifth letter, you seem almost a little warm; but I am so far from wondering at it, that I am surprized, considering the cause you have undertaken to plead for, and the firm persuasion you have of its truth, that you are not more angry with me than you are. Indeed, I must confess, that I had great hopes, that our manner of writing controversy would have been a pattern to others, and that nothing in the least bitter would have appeared through the whole. But, oh, how rare it is to find controversial writings without some acrimony!

You have *Devils* over five times in half a page, and ask seven questions in the same. Let me ask you one question. Did you not harp upon the word *Devils*, with a design to prejudice people against the system which I hold, and which you suppose involves in its consequences the restoration of fallen angels?

angels? If you were to be asked, whether those angels who fell were not the creatures of God, created by his powerful hand, and were once the objects of his delight, what would you say? Is not God unchangeable? If he loved them with a love of complacency in their pure state, can you prove from Scripture, that he does not love them with a love of pity now? And if God should be pleased, through Jesus Christ, to humble, and even finally to restore them, would you have any objection? But to return to men. And here I will only mention one instance of practical religion, and if you can fairly answer the argument, I wish you to do so. But you must bestow a little more labour upon it than upon all the instances I have mentioned put together. St. Paul, if I understand him, commands us to pray for all men, that they might be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; yea, and to pray for this fervently and universally, without wrath, and without *doubting*. Now is it possible for any to pray for the salvation of all men without doubting, who believe, that, perhaps, by far the greatest part of the human race will never be saved at all, but be miserable while God exists? Is it possible that God should command us to believe any one thing, and yet at the same time to pray in faith, without doubting, for just the contrary.

As for your reflection, that I "treat sacred subjects in such a manner, as to play upon the fancies and passions of weak and ignorant men, who lie open to deception, and are ready to believe any thing rather than the plain declarations of the Bible." I can safely say, in answer, that I would not knowingly do so for the world; and I can heartily join with the Apostles in saying, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." 2 Cor. i. 12.

"Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Chap. iv. 1, 2.

"Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." Heb. xiii. 18.

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God."

1 John, iii. 20, 21.

I can

I can say in this instance, with the utmost safety, that my heart doth not condemn me. I never did preach to any people what I did not believe at the time; and I endeavour to take the utmost care not to substitute my fancies instead of Scripture testimony: I am sure that I have no corrupt design in preaching and writing in the manner that I do, and I have that good opinion of you, that your motives in writing, &c. are the same as mine, viz. the glory of God, the good of mankind, and the advancement of the interest of a dear Redeemer. Why God should suffer those who with sincere and upright hearts seek to know his truth, and do his will, so widely to differ, we know not now, but, perhaps, we shall know hereafter. In the mean time, let us walk together so far as we are agreed, and wherein we are differently minded, let us hope that God, in his own time, will reveal the truth to whichsoever of us may ignorantly err therefrom.

I am always exceedingly pleased with St. Paul's confession before Felix, and I would sincerely wish to imitate him in his *worship, faith, hope, and practice.*

Acts, xxiv. 14, 15, 16. But this I confess unto thee, that
 “ after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God
 “ of my fathers, believing all things which are written in
 “ the law and the Prophets; and have hope towards God,
 “ which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a re-
 “ surrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And
 “ herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void
 “ of offence toward God, and toward men.”

With this *good confession*, worthy of an Apostle of Christ, and of all who bear the Christian name, I shall close this Letter, and subscribe myself, dear Sir,

Your sincere friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER V.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I AM almost afraid that I shall find it more difficult to answer your Sixth Letter than all the rest; not that there is more force of reasoning and argument in it than in the others, perhaps less; but there appears in it more of a design to *provoke* (using your own expression) than I have observed before. Indeed, reproof in itself is a bitter pill, and must be well sugared over with the sugar of love, or the patient will not take it down. I was naturally of a hasty temper myself, and therefore I sincerely pity those that are so; time has been when it would have moved me to great wrath to have been charged with *speaking*, much more *writing* and *publishing* what I *knew* to be a *falsehood*. But now, I can say, through grace it gives me not the smallest degree of pain, and especially, as I am not conscious of intending even to *misrepresent*, far less *wilfully* to lie, and what is worse, to *lie in print*, where any person would have it in his power to detect me with the utmost ease. This charge is not against me alone, a worthy friend is involved with me. But I say, let any candid person judge, whether what we told the world was what we knew to be a falsehood. For my part, I had not the least suspicion that there was the smallest difference between the sense of what you said, and what we told the world that you said. And now, after the most careful examination that I am able to make, I can see no difference in sense, nothing on which so weighty a charge can stand, which if proved, must invalidate our testimony, and entirely ruin our character in the world. And you know, that we should not rob our neighbour of his good name.

But in order to see the difference between what you said, and what we told the world that you said, it will be necessary to set the words in opposite columns, and then all that read may judge for themselves.

Mr.

Mr. Taylor said in his Sermon,

“ That the English word
“ *everlasting* signifies *never-*
“ *ending*, is too well known
“ by the weakest person in
“ this assembly, to stand in
“ the least need of proof.”

Mr. W. and his Friend have told the world that Mr. Taylor says,

“ The weakest of them (the
assembly to whom he preached)
“ precisely know the meaning
“ of the word *everlasting*.”

Now I will leave it to every man of sober sense to judge whether there is any real difference between the sense in these opposite columns. If the weakest in the assembly knew, that the word *everlasting* signified *never ending*, too well to stand in the least need of proof; did they not *precisely know* the meaning of the word *everlasting*? Can any thing be more evident? and yet this, dear Sir, is the only ground on which you charge us with telling the world what we *both know to be a falsehood*; a crime of the meanest nature, and blackest dye. If this is not making a man an offender for a word, yea, much less than a word, can you tell me what is? If every man was chargeable with lying who varies from the truth no more than we did in the above instance, not only would no flesh be saved (since all liars are to have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death) but nearly every repetition of conversation in the world might pass for barefaced lies. For unless every word was repeated exactly verbatim (even though the sense was perfectly the same) the whole might with equal propriety be called (not only a mistake, or misrepresentation, but) a *known falsehood*. And in that case how much better would it have been for us all, to have been from our infancy deprived of the power of speech.

But with what propriety could you accuse me of telling the world that you had written what you had not written, and what I knew to be a falsehood, when at the bottom of the 48th page, and top of the 49th, I had transcribed your very words? For the passage which gave you such offence was copied verbatim out of my friend's letter; and if there *had been* any real difference between what you said, and what he had written, still the world could have been in no danger of being imposed upon, as your very words immediately preceded; and consequently had there been any great difference, enough to ground such a heavy charge upon, we should have injured not you, but ourselves. I never knew an instance where any person that

that meant to misrepresent another's words, should first copy the sentence exactly, and then set down something quite different, and tell the world that the last sentence was the very one delivered, although he had just before said that the other contained the identical words. We must have been not only *liars*, but worse than *fools* thus to have exposed ourselves.

I always thought that if one quoted the exact sense of an author, though he should not mention the precise words, yet was he not to be called a *liar*, or charged with publishing *known falsehoods*.

By the same rule might we not accuse the New Testament writers? for there are many quotations made by them from the Prophets, that differ in expression much more from the Hebrew original, than my friend's quotation differs from your words; as must be evident to all who read and compare them.

What could have been your reason for laying so heavy a charge upon so slight a foundation? I would not judge, but was it not done with an intention to shew the world what was to be expected from those who believed in the *General Restoration*, however such might boast much of their candour, integrity, and love? And did you not magnify a *mole hill* into a *mountain*, to make it appear that we are so far from being *honest and candid men*, that we *falsify and misrepresent known facts*, and say that a person has written what we *know he has not written*, in order to have an opportunity to *sneer* at him. I am glad however that you are not able to give any greater proofs of our being of such unchristian and unmanly dispositions, than the specimen before mentioned. But if the public, before whose bar we now try our cause, should acquit us of so black a crime, I should by no means wish any to insinuate that the guilt of it should fall upon yourself; for I would wish to judge in the most favourable light, and I rather suppose that you saw the quotation from my friend's letter in a worse light than he intended it; and felt your resentment rise for a moment, and thinking the *Universal Restoration* a very *bad doctrine*, and leading to all evil, you thought you could not do greater service to mankind, than by levelling a home blow at the characters of those who professed to believe and were willing to defend it.

My writing in this manner is not out of the least disrespect to you, far otherwise. Mr. T—— twice endeavoured to draw me into the field with him, and wrote in the most bitter and violent manner, calling me *liar*, *traitor*, and the *greatest monster* of wickedness in the world, &c. yet of him I took no notice: for what could I expect from one who was capable of

E

uttering

uttering such abuse? But I believe you to be quite another sort of a man; and therefore doubt not, but though you might write thus in haste, yet upon a calm review, you are sorry you laid the charge so very high. And I assure you, Sir, I am sorry I published that paragraph of my good friend's letter; partly, because there appears something a little ironical in the passage, partly because it was not directly necessary, but *chiefly*, because it provoked you to write such a severe sentence, which I have been obliged thus to answer.

Why is it so much the case in the world, that Christians cannot think differently from each other, but they must suspect one another of bad principles, and bad actions? And, especially, most sects seem to agree, that there must be something extremely bad in those persons who are capable of believing, that God is good to all, and that *his tender mercies are over all his works*.

How frequently, in this very book of your's, you express hints of the dreadful tendency of my principles, both with respect to myself, and those that hear me? And yet, if I might be allowed to speak a word in my own defence, I have the most earnest wish, and sincere desire, both to be holy myself, in heart, life, and conversation, and, as far as possible, to induce others to be so.

But, alas, for the poor *Universalists*! their sentiments are looked upon so exceeding bad, that they are thought capable of any crime.

To this purpose I will mention a circumstance, that happened to a man that I knew very well, now I hope with the Lord. He was a serious Christian, and had been a preacher a number of years. When he first heard of the universal doctrine, he was violently set against it; and opposed it to the utmost of his power. Finally, however, he came to believe and rejoice in it. Some little time after he took a journey to visit the children of one of his deceased sisters. The people were exceedingly glad to see their uncle, who had travelled far to visit them. But, in the course of the evening, he happened to mention the *universal* doctrine, and told his relations what he believed. They were very much alarmed at what he said, and, as is commonly the case, reprobated the idea! After a good deal of conversation, he was conducted into his lodging-room to take his rest. After he was in bed, he heard a prodigious noise against the door of the room in which he lay. In the morning when he arose, he could not get out; for they had set all the furniture of the adjoining room against his door,

so

so as effectually to confine him in his chamber as in a prison. After calling some time, they came and released him, and he enquired the reason, why they had fastened him up in that manner? And after considerable urging, they told him, that it was on account of his principles, for they thought them so bad, that they were afraid he would get up in the night and murder them all; and therefore had taken the precaution to make him a prisoner, for their own safety. So great were their fears of their own uncle, whom they had known for some years to be a sober and religious man. And I doubt not but there are many, that think all that hold the *Universal Restoration* are evil-minded people, and who would not stick at any crime that they had an opportunity to commit. And though I have not the least idea that one of your understanding and liberality of sentiment would carry the matter so far; yet that you have unkind suspicions of me is evident, and the general tendency of your book is to encrease the popular odium against me, which perhaps is fully sufficient already. But all this, and more I am willing to endure; if it may please God to make me an instrument of any good to my fellow men.

I now come to notice your other assertions in favour of *endless misery*, and your observations on my remarks.

Your Sixth Letter begins with a paragraph, that it will be necessary that I should particularly notice, and therefore I shall take the liberty to transcribe it.

“ Having done with Mr. W’s Six Reasons which he offered
 “ to Mr. De Coetlogon, I now return to his Remarks on my
 “ *Discourse*. He thinks the limited duration of future misery
 “ is more than clearly implied in FEW STRIPES, St. Luke xii.
 “ 47, 48. But why? He well knows that beating with
 “ stripes is a figurative expression, alluding to the punishing
 “ among men, Deut. xxv. 1—4. He also knows, that *few*
 “ is a comparative word, which has no necessary connection
 “ with duration, but naturally expresses a smaller degree of
 “ punishment than that of those who have sinned more
 “ grievously.”

I am still of the mind, that the limited duration of punishment is certainly held forth in those words of our Lord; and if I am any thing of a judge of either language or argument, what you have brought against it here, has not the least tendency to overthrow it. The passage of Scripture to which you allude, appears to me so far from being in your favour, that it is directly against your argument. I will transcribe it, and see what conclusion may most naturally be drawn therefrom. Deut.

xxv. 1, 2, 3. "If there be a controversy between men, and
 "they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them:
 "then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the
 "wicked. And it shall be if the wicked man be worthy to be
 "beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to
 "be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain
 "number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed:
 "Lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with
 "many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee."

Here we see judgment and justice followed with mercy. The judges were to judge of the controversy, and justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. So, *the Judge of all the earth will do right; he will by no means clear the guilty: We are sure that the judgment of God will be according to truth: With him there is no respect of persons.* He will judge every man according to his ways, and as his work shall be; and those whom he shall find guilty at that day of judgment, he will condemn. So he taught men to do, and it would be horrid to suppose, that he will act in direct opposition to his own rules.

If the judge found the wicked man worthy to be beaten, he was to cause him immediately to *lie down in sorrow*, in the most humble posture, and there to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, *by a certain number*. There was no respite, no begging off, no corruption; the punishment was to be executed in the presence of the judge and his attendants; and the stripes were to be laid on, *according to his fault*, not *lighter or heavier*, as he had been more or less guilty, but by a certain number; *more or fewer*, as he had deserved, but were not to exceed *forty*. Now, supposing, instead of thirty-nine severe stripes, they had explained the words *few* and *many*, as you do, for greater and smaller degrees of punishment, and thus concluded the meaning of the law to be, that those who were most criminal, should be beaten constantly as long as they lived with very severe strokes; and that others who were less guilty, should be punished during the same time, but with gentler blows; their conduct would have been about as near the letter of the law, as *endless misery* would be to the evident meaning of our Saviour's words.

How just are the laws of righteousness! and at the very first glance strike the most ignorant and insensible with their beauty and propriety; but the doctrine of *endless punishment* in the lake of fire, for the least sins as well as the greatest, does by no means appear in that light, even to many who profess to believe

believe it. Now whatever secrets there may be in the administration of government, the justice of all penalties ought to be so self-evident, as to strike every mind at first view, without any manner of hesitation; but *endless damnation* while God exists, for the crimes of a short life, and even for sins of ignorance, does not appear in that amiable light. However, if the Scriptures assured us, that *endless misery* was to be the portion of all who die in their sins, and that while *God exists* they were never to be released, I should think it my duty to leave the matter with him that made man, dark as it might appear. But when we hear our Saviour laying down the very rule by which punishment shall be inflicted in a future state, so exactly according to that which God gave to Moses of old, that even you acknowledge that he alluded thereto, it appears so just and reasonable, and (to me) is so very express for *limited* (but not *endless*) punishment, that it makes the subject as clear as the sun at noon day.

One would almost think that the very dreadful torment mentioned in Rev. xiv. 10. as inflicted *in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb*, alluded to the wicked under the law being punished, or beaten, before the face of the Judge, as well as by his order.

The very reason given by Moses for not exceeding a certain number of stripes, was, "Lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, *then thy brother, (even the wicked man, worthy to be punished, yet still called a brother) should seem vile unto thee.*"

Thus God calls *Sodom* (many hundreds of years after its destruction by fire and brimstone from Heaven) the *sister of Jerusalem*, and greatly blames Jerusalem, not only that her sins were more than double to the crimes of Sodom, but that also in the day of her pride she scorned so much as to mention the name of her *sister Sodom*; whom God declared to be *still her sister*, and that the time should come when she should be brought to receive in the kindest manner, even as daughters, those very people whom she had scorned and contemned in the days of her iniquity, and looked upon as beneath her notice. Just so the generality of professors at present look upon the damned in Hell, though some of them while in life were their dearest friends and nearest relatives. See Ezek. xvi. 45—63.

Now, from this very text in Deut. xxv. 1, 2, 3, may it not be fairly concluded, that he who taught the judges of Israel to beat the wicked man according to his fault, which is explained by a certain limited number of stripes, will himself

judge, and punish the wicked *according to their works* and faults, that is, *by a certain number of stripes*, or limited punishment? And especially where we find that Jesus speaks the very same language with respect to the punishments of the next life; and thus seems evidently to confirm the idea that naturally arises from the consideration of the law of Moses.

If the word *few* has no necessary connection with duration, it certainly is opposed to *many*, not only in the nature of language, but in the very sentence of our Lord where it is found. And I think we might as well explain the words of Job, *Are not my days FEW?* Job, x. 20, really to intend the days of eternity, or, as long as God shall exist, as to explain the words of our Saviour, *few stripes*, to mean that the servant who knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall continue without a moment's cessation to be beaten (though with lighter stripes than the wilfully disobedient) as long as God exists. I therefore, after the most serious deliberation, repeat what I said in my Remarks: 'I am really blind, if the limited duration of future misery is not more than clearly *implied* in FEW STRIPES. For how can those stripes be called *few* that shall finally exceed in number the drops of water in the ocean, and shall never cease while God exists?'

There is one thing more that I would just notice before I quit this point; and that is, that all writers in favour of *endless damnation*, and you among the rest, suppose it is necessary, in order to clear the Divine character, and vindicate the justice of God, to state, that there shall be very different degrees of misery inflicted upon the wicked in the lake of fire and brimstone, and that the pain of some shall be light, very light compared to that of others. But why, upon your principles, should this be necessary? You have asserted, that every offence against God justly deserves *infinite punishment*, and that as none can endure this in a *limited duration*, consequently they must continue in that state to all eternity. Now, if every offence deserves *infinite punishment*, can there be any reason given why all offenders should not bear constantly as much pain as they could possibly endure without destroying their existence? For since the punishment can never be fully endured, and God is then supposed to desire nothing else but their greatest misery, and has not the smallest pity or compassion upon them, nor the least care over them, nor any intention of reclaiming them, having abandoned them, and all concern about them, except that of making them as miserable as possible; what remains,
or

or can remain, but that all of them, the small as well as the great, being cast into one undistinguished state of torment, even the lake of fire, shall there all alike suffer the greatest possible tortures to all eternity? And the very same arguments that would lead to confirm the idea of *different* degrees of punishment (since every offence deserves *infinite* degrees) would finally tend us by the same rule to limit the *time*, as well as the degrees of punishment. But I forbear, and must just glance over a few other things in this Letter.

As for what I said respecting the design of the furnace, I should not have concluded the general Restoration to be certain from that alone; but as the original design of furnaces amongst men is certainly for melting and refining metals, as you must acknowledge, I was ready to judge God's furnace was designed for some valuable purpose; but you seem to think, and express what I should hardly have expected any Christian Minister would have said, at least in so many words. "But usefulness and purification seem at the farthest distance from the thoughts of the Sacred Writers."

This very idea represents God as acting without design, in punishing the wicked, which to me appears unworthy of his glorious character, infinitely more than it would be unworthy the character of a wise and good man to be at great expence, and spend much time and labour for no purpose at all, and even without intention. How could men learn to credit a system that represents God, who has never yet acted without the wisest and best designs, in all that he has done, as intending at the close of all to forsake his general plan, and punish his creatures, without having the least regard to usefulness? I really think (since God in all his other works and ways appears to have usefulness constantly in his thoughts) that you *ought to produce* (to use your own words) *some good Scripture authority for talking at this rate, before you venture upon it.* It appears to me self-evident, that God must have some real design in the future punishment of his intelligent creatures, and that such his design must of necessity be worthy of a God of boundless wisdom, universal benevolence, and infinite power: And allowing those two self-evident principles, it will naturally follow, that the punishment of the wicked in Hell is intended for the destruction of the evil principle in them, that so the grace of God might operate in and upon their souls, and that they might be cleansed and restored by the blood of the Lamb, and the operations of the Holy Spirit. You must have read my works in a very cursory manner, not to observe, that I ascribe

the glory of man's salvation and recovery, whether here or hereafter, to the Divine agency. But that as God makes use of afflictions and sufferings in the present time to humble and bring down the haughtiness of men, that his grace may effect their salvation, so in the future ages he will inflict severer pains upon the stubborn and rebellious, still having the same purpose in view.

I believe it is generally acknowledged by all, that *God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, in this world; and why should it be supposed, that he changes his purposes towards them when they depart this life? I am of the mind you will find this hard to prove from Scripture; and since it is easy to prove, that God's intentions in all afflictive dispensations, are to take away sin, and this without limitation of time or place, it lies upon you to shew from Scripture, that after death he hath no such designs towards his creatures. That is, you must not only prove that their state is materially changed by death, but also that God himself is changed with respect to them, and that he no longer wishes their good, nor seeks their recovery. And whereas all his dispensations before were intended as means to reclaim them, yet when once they pass into the unseen state, he has no such intention, but either *none at all*, or, what is more shocking, *directly the contrary*. I own I should be sorry, for the honour of God, and the glory of the Divine Character, if you could fairly prove this from Scripture; but I should entirely give up the idea of the Universal Restoration, without any other argument. If your words above cited were the words of inspiration, I should have but little hopes of being able to prove the future recovery of all mankind.

If the doctrine of the Restoration was of no further use to me than to teach me how the imprecations of the Old Testament may be reconciled to the spirit of the Gospel, and the command to love our enemies, &c. I should esteem it one of the greatest discoveries that ever God was pleased to make to me, and matter of thankfulness and gratitude as long as I live. For by this the seeming inconsistency is wholly removed, and one of the most popular grounds of infidelity entirely destroyed.

I might write much upon this subject, but I shall mention one passage, which may serve as a key to others of the like nature, and also to shew that God's punishments inflicted upon the rebellious are intended to be useful.

In Psalm lxxxiii. David prays against the enemies of God, in the most terrible manner; that they might become as dung upon the earth, and be utterly destroyed. And not only so, but

but he seems to pursue them into the other state, and after praying that they might perish from off the earth, he adds, "O, my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: And they shall know (so it is according to the original, and so rendered in the old translation) that thou whole name is JEHOVAH, art the MOST HIGH over all the earth." Ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

Here we see the use of their being cut off from the earth, and then troubled and put to shame (as the wicked shall be) in the next state, for the age, or ages, viz. that they may seek the name of the Lord; and this is God's design, in causing them to perish, that they may know him to be the Most High over all the earth; and in consequence submit to him as such. And the same must be implied in all such like threatenings, though not always expressed.

I believe that all shall see at last, that God hath not acted without design, and his designs are worthy of himself, and shall finally terminate in his glory, and the happiness of his creatures.

Where do you find in my writings, that "It is a great mercy for impenitent sinners to be sent to Hell, in order to prepare them for happiness" and that "Hell, it seems, is superior to the Gospel in its purifying quality?" I will not charge you with telling the world what you *know to be a falsehood*, as you did me upon a far slighter ground. But I endeavour to hold forth, that a state of torment in Hell is *judgment without mercy*; but that finally *mercy shall rejoice against judgment*. And I have always declared, that the precious blood of Christ, and the grace of God, are designed to cleanse from all sin. I can hardly tell how it is possible for any to misunderstand me, except it is willingly at least, if not wilfully: But prejudice blinds the eyes in such a manner, that it prevents us from seeing what would otherwise be plain enough.

The idea of reaping according to what we sow, more or less in proportion to our works, still appears to me as calculated to set forth not *endless*, but *limited* punishment. Our Saviour thought, that if the seed of the word yielded an *hundred fold*, it was well, and a very good crop: But *endless damnation* for the

the sins of a short life, (and those sins atoned for by the blood of Christ too) is more than a *million million fold*, ten thousand million times over; nay, it is impossible ever to reap all the harvest upon your system.

I do not see that I am obliged to prove Hell to be a place of mercy, in order to apply those words of St. James, *mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, to the deliverance of mankind from Hell: for you must acknowledge that mercy will greatly rejoice against judgment, if Christ Jesus should ever shew mercy to those who experience a visitation of *Judgment without mercy*. And if you can tell me of any of God's creatures, that experience judgment without the least mixture of mercy, except "those who are consigned to that dreadful place," I will then grant that St. James might have alluded to something else.

Concerning all Revolutions of time being ended at the day of Judgment I have not much more to say; if day and night are not Revolutions of time, I am in the wrong, but yet I trust that were this a mistake, it would not wholly overthrow the system of the *General Restoration*, since even eternity itself belongs to God, and he can reclaim and restore mankind therein as well as in time, if such be his pleasure. And, *he will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*; and if this be not done, in what we call time, it shall take place in God's time; for I do not find any limitation of time nor place. And therefore since the fact itself is certain, no difficulty need to arise with respect to the time. God, who is the author of time, will find time enough, to accomplish all his purposes, both of judgment and mercy; and if mercy rejoiceth against (or triumphs over) judgment, then will the strange work of judgment be first accomplished, and afterwards the triumph of mercy take place, and universally prevail.

There is one idea that you and many others seem to have, viz. That Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father soon after he shall come in the clouds of Heaven, and either just before, or immediately after the Judgment. This seems expressly contrary to the prophecy of Daniel, who saw in vision, "And behold one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of Heaven and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him." But so far was he then from resigning the kingdom, that the Prophet says, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 13, 14.

And

And our Saviour's words confirm this sense of the prophecy, "A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." St. Luke, xix. 12. These texts teach us that we must not understand St. Paul to mean that Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, either at his coming, or immediately after the resurrection of the dead, or directly after the judgment. And indeed, one would think that St. Paul himself, had sufficiently informed us that the kingdom of Christ is to last for a considerable time, after he shall receive it, by his saying that he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, "when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign *till* he hath put all enemies under his feet. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, *then* shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. 28. Thus it plainly appears from St. Paul's own words, that the kingdom must continue in the hands of Christ, until he hath subdued all things to himself. So that the words, *Then cometh the end*, &c. imply, that after his coming, and the resurrection of the dead, the time shall finally come when there shall be an end of his kingdom; but lest we should imagine that the end of it should instantly succeed the resurrection and judgment, &c. he directly informs us, what shall take place first, viz. *The total subjection of all things to himself*. And this according to other Scriptures will require *ages of ages*, as we have seen already. But of them all it may be truly said, *The end cometh or shall come*.

I thought, I had abundantly proved in my Letter to Mr. De C—— that there should be new Heavens and a new Earth after the conflagration; indeed the words of St. Peter and St. John; 2 Pet. iii. 13. and Rev. xxi. 1. are sufficient of themselves to prove the fact. But I went farther, and pointed out in nine instances, the difference from Scripture, between the Millenium and the New Heavens and Earth; and therefore the reality of the existence of both was thereby proved, if I know what *proving* is: for it can hardly be supposed that the Lord would condescend to give us characteristicks of two states that shall never take place.

But I must refer you and my readers to the fourteenth number of my Lectures on the Prophecies, for a farther account of the Heavens and Earth: the evidence from Scripture that God will create them: and his gracious designs in so doing.

I do not consider that I shift the ground of the controversy quite so often as you assert. I have at different times required different things to be proved, but none of them being yet proved to my satisfaction, I cannot be said to have shifted the *hinge* of the controversy. If I had agreed to put it upon one point, and you had proved that fairly, and I had given it up, and yet refused to yield, but required something else; you might then have charged me with changing the ground.

I am so far from being convinced that *aionion* always intends *never ending*, in the New Testament, that I think I have proved the contrary, and I am far from ever having given up that ground of argument; for the way to obtain a knowledge of any point is not only to view the particular passages that treat of any subject apart by themselves, but to view them in connection with the great *whole*, even all the parts of the grand system. I have already produced many of what appear to me *positive* promises of the *Restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets since the world began, and your repeated denials of their existence, though accompanied with very strong expressions, ("that there is no *express promise*, or *positive assertion* of *Universal Salvation* in the Bible, is as certain as that the Bible is extant:") can never blot them from the sacred book.

Therefore I still consider this ground as defensible. And as to there being no revolutions of time after the judgment, which you think you have proved, I hope you will acknowledge that *day and night shall still continue*, those well known *Revolutions* of time. I do not yet see, that I am obliged to give up even this point, and have no occasion to chuse a fresh ground.

As for the apparent inconsistencies that you point out in my system, that sometimes I represent the wicked punished in hell, according to the proportion and magnitude of their crimes; and sometimes with a view to bring them to submission, &c. I must observe once for all, (and the same is expressed in my writings) that I suppose the same degrees of pain and sorrow, that the transgressions of men have deserved, are just those that are sufficient to humble and subdue them; and that both these designs go on exactly together; and thus in my own view there is no inconsistency at all.

And so with respect to sufferings, and the grace of God; each has its place; sufferings subdue, and the grace of God restores. I see no difficulty here at all; far less such a crowd as rush at once upon your mind. I am persuaded a little attention bestowed upon them, would cause the most of them to vanish away. For instance, is there any inconsistency in the same

same crime being both pardoned and punished? if there is, the inconsistency is in the Scriptures, and not in my system only. To give you a few instances. Did not God in the very same sentence, *promise to pardon*, and *threaten to punish* the same crime? When the Israelites made a golden calf, God threatened to destroy them, yet when Moses interceded for them, God said, "Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: Behold, mine angel shall go before thee: Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." *Exod. xxxii. 34.*

And at another time when all the congregation, except two men, had murmured against the Lord, and he had threatened to destroy the people utterly, yet at the earnest intercession of Moses he condescended to say, "I have pardoned according to thy word:" but immediately lifted up his hand and swore by himself, that they should never enter into his rest; but should die in the wilderness. And thus the very sin that God said, "I have pardoned;" he immediately threatened with a very severe punishment, which he executed upon them. See *Numb. xiv.*

Did not Nathan say to David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die;" and yet at the same time threatened him with severe punishments, which followed him to the day of his death? *2 Sam. xii. 13.*

Does not David say, in *Psalms xcix. 8.* "Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God; thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions?"

Isaiah speaks of Jerusalem having her *iniquity pardoned*, after she had received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins, *Isai. xl. 2.*

Does not our Lord, in the parable, speak of the servant, to whom the amazing sum of ten thousand talents was forgiven, who was afterwards cast to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him? *St. Matt. xviii. 23—35.* Thus pardon and punishment are perfectly consistent with each other.

Some there are, that can see no consistency between atonement for sin, and the forgiveness of transgression. But the law is full of such inconsistencies, *he shall confess his sin, and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.*

What a surprising thing it is that you should say, "If sinners are punished according to their works, they have no part in the redemption of Christ; they cannot reasonably be required to sing his praises for their deliverance, nor to give him thanks for it!" Now, dear Sir, at one stroke you set
aside

aside either the redemption of Christ, or a future state of rewards and punishments. For by the same rule I may say, " If
 " saints are rewarded according to their works, they have no
 " part in the redemption of Christ, they cannot reasonably be
 " required to sing his praises for their admittance into Heaven, nor
 " to give him thanks for it." Now the Scripture tells us " That
 " every one (both saint and sinner) shall receive the things done
 " in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be
 " good or bad:" and that God, " will render to every man
 " according to his deeds: To them who by patient continu-
 " ance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immorta-
 " lity; eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do
 " not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and
 " wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that
 " doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but
 " glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to
 " the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no re-
 " spect of persons with God." 2 Cor. v. 10. Rom. ii. 6—11.
 But if this be the case, as certainly it is, then according to your
 scheme, the redemption of Christ is set aside, and neither saint
 nor sinner has any part in it. But cannot Jesus place those
 whom he hath purchased with his blood in a state of probation,
 and reward or punish them according to their deeds in that state,
 without excluding them from having any part in his redemp-
 tion? All things being now given into the hands of Christ, he
 may give them laws, and punish those who break them, and
 yet they may have a part in his redemption.

You would fain represent, that I take the glory from Christ,
 because I suppose some for whom Jesus shed his blood may be
 punished for certain periods, for their sins against him, and
 then may be restored; whereas you do not suspect yourself,
 although you believe that most of them for whom he suffered
 death, shall be damned to all eternity. I should think this was
 depreciating the precious blood of the Saviour of Mankind, and
 rendering both his labours and sufferings vain: But as I
 am sure that you do not mean to slight the blood of the Co-
 venant, I would by no means speak slightly of you. But then
 I claim the same friendly disposition to be exercised towards
 me. Many are disposed to represent me as an enemy to the
 merits of the Saviour's blood, and the redemption by Christ, for
 no other reason that I can see, but that I have larger ideas of the
 efficacy thereof than themselves. For let me ask those good people,
 that upon a supposition that a remedy was discovered, that
 they had found would cure every disorder in a certain stage,
 but,

but believed, that after a certain crisis it could do no good, nor be of any use : and supposing another had tried it in a higher state of disease, and found it efficacious in every case, is it possible that he should be looked upon as a depreciator of the virtues of such a remedy, merely because he had a far higher opinion of its efficacy than others ?

You believe, that the blood of the Lamb shall *never cleanse* and heal all the souls for whom it was shed : I believe it *shall*, without failing in any one case.

You believe, that Christ's blood has no power over those for whom it was shed, after this life ; but I believe that it has universal power over all, and in all periods, till all shall be completely restored.

" Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood

" Shall *never* lose its power,

" Till all the ransom'd of our God

" Are sav'd, to sin no more."

Now, if believing that the blood of Christ shall take away all iniquity, and cleanse all mankind from all sin, in this age, and in the ages to come, I say, if this is having low and contemptible ideas of the redemption of Christ, then I have unworthy and mean ideas of it. But if, upon comparison, the views that I have of Christ and redemption by him, shall be found ten thousand times more extensive than the common ideas, then do not accuse the plan which I hold forth, as taking the glory from him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the Lamb, and ascribing it to creatures.

I must own, however, that it is quite strange reasoning to me, to say, that a person in the greatest distress, (even though he should justly suffer it for his faults) whom some friendly hand should set free, should, instead of thanking his benefactor, ascribe all the praise to himself, because he had suffered all his troubles on account of his crimes. The very idea is ridiculous, and almost ludicrous ! I always thought, that the greater the distress and misery of any might be, the greater would be their joy and gratitude at being delivered from it. I never knew that our enduring great afflictions in this life would make us less thankful for a Saviour, or in the least would tend to set aside his redemption ; and why the bearing infinitely greater miseries in a future state, upon the same principle, should prevent those who have endured it, when they are delivered, from ascribing praise and salvation to God and the Lamb, I cannot see ; and both reason and Scripture shew the contrary. So that, in all your train of absurdities already produced, I cannot see *one* that in the least deserves the name, or appears in the smallest

smallest degree difficult. What the *multitude of difficulties* which you have reserved to a future opportunity may be, I know not, and therefore cannot pretend to answer them; when you mention what they are, I trust I shall be ready to attend to them.

I confess I cannot see a single difficulty upon the plan which I hold, but may be easily solved with a little attention, to my satisfaction, at least. I am heartily willing to meet all the objections that can possibly be raised against this glorious system, and doubt not by God's assistance, I shall be able to answer them.

I am not conscious, dear Sir, of being "unwilling to come to the light, and appearing on fair ground:" Of all your many charges against me in your book, none appeared so unaccountable to me as this; for I fear no investigation, or free enquiry into my sentiments, and therefore in all my writings I have endeavoured to lay them open in the fairest manner possible without disguise. And if I have in some measure avoided personal controversy, it was, because I wished to live in friendship with all good men, however they might differ from me in many points, and not from any consciousness of the weakness of my cause.

As you are the first that ever I heard of, who either in word or in writing accused me on this head, I was the more surprized to see a charge of such a nature in the works of a Minister of your candour, so contrary to all that even my professed enemies have hitherto alledged against me.

I entirely pass over your remarks upon my being *always brim-full of self importance*, and several other charges of the same kind in your Letters. I have need of pardon for my defects, and I take in good part even the reproaches of my foes, and much more I ought to receive in love the wounds of a friend; and as you declare that you *have no personal resentment* against me (as I cannot see why you should have) I would wish to esteem you as one. I have endeavoured sincerely, through the whole of what I have here written to you, to avoid every expression and remark that I thought would be likely to give offence; if any thing of the kind has escaped me, I sincerely ask your pardon and kind indulgence.

Wishing you every blessing, of this life, and that which is to come, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your sincere friend,

And servant in Christ Jesus,

Our blessed Lord and dear Redeemer,

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.



